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THE GREEK THEATER OF THE FIFTH  
CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

BY  
JAMES TURNEY ALLEN

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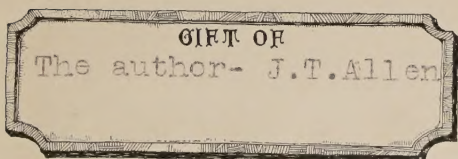
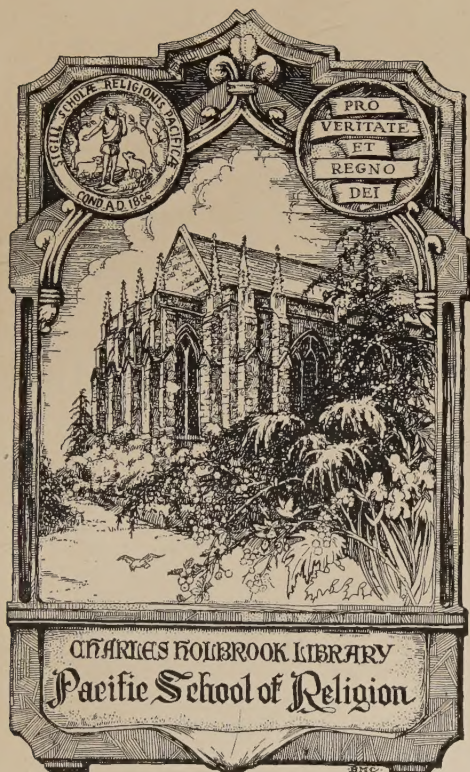
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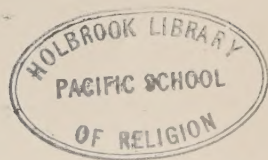
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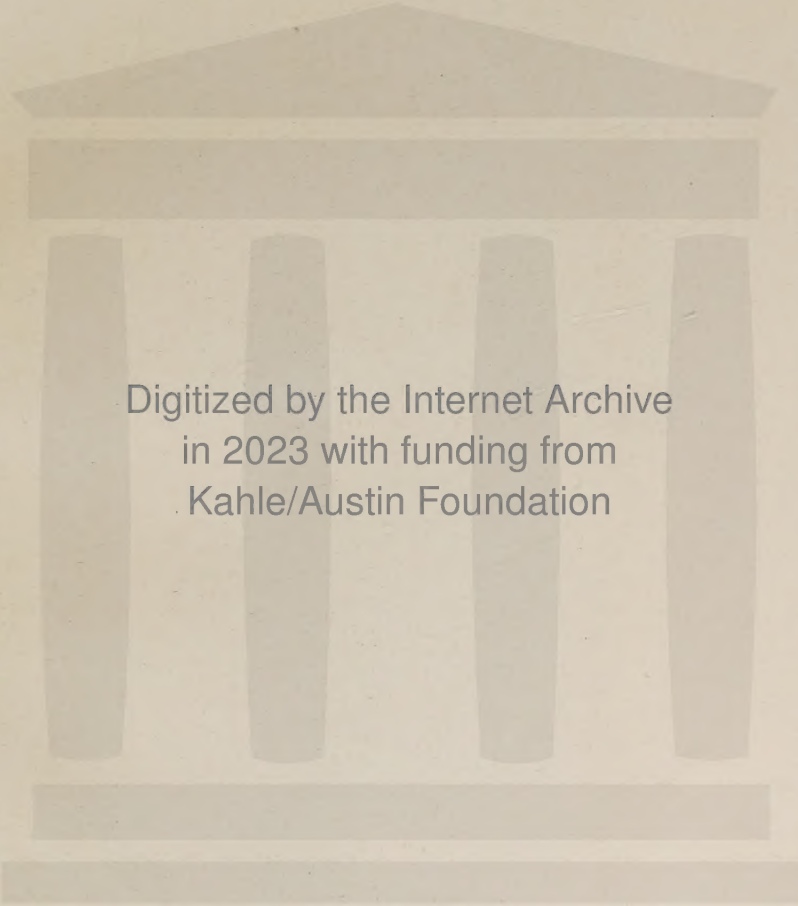
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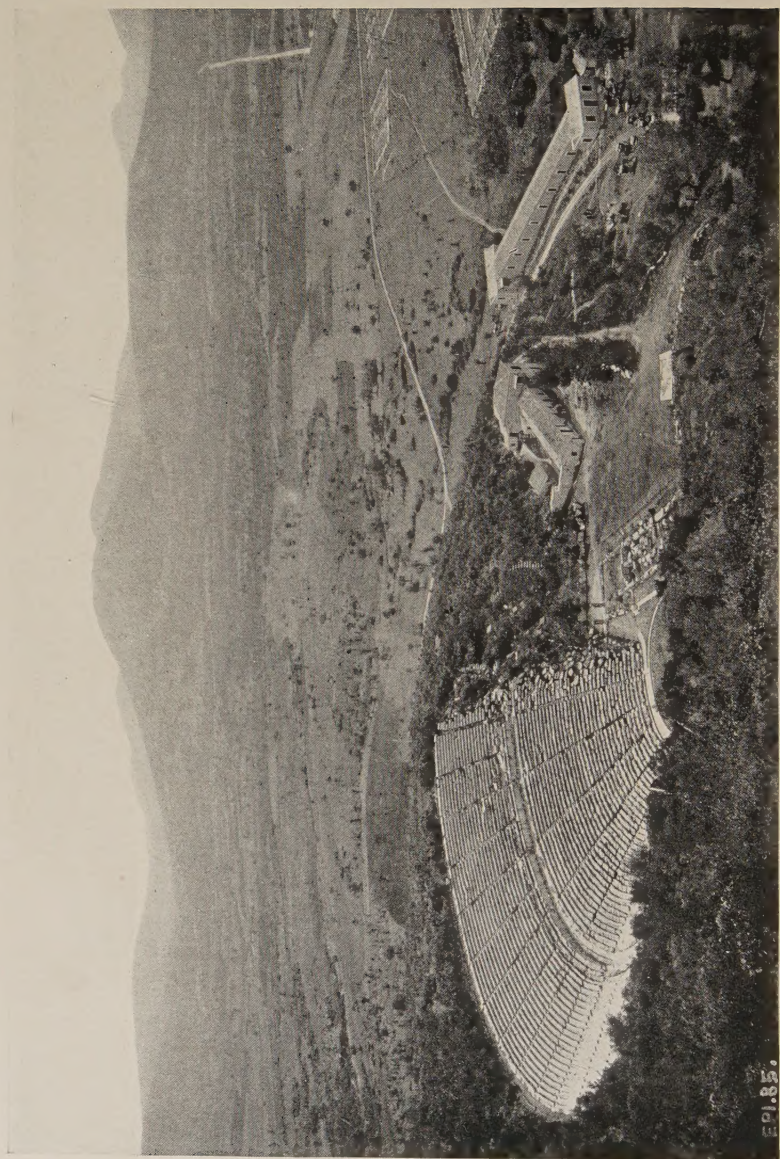


FIG. 1.—THE THEATER AT EPIDAUROS.

*Frontispiece*



THE GREEK THEATER  
OF THE FIFTH CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

BY

JAMES TURNEY ALLEN





## PREFACE

THE following pages were written under great pressure during the troubled months of the summer of 1918. For many years the problem of the reconstruction of the fifth-century theater at Athens had had for me a strange fascination. No matter how far afield I might wander or how hopeless the quest might appear, invariably I found myself yielding again to its spell and returning with new devotion to the tasks which it imposed. But the way led through a baffling intricacy of conjectures from which escape seemed forever barred. At length, however, in the spring of last year I suddenly realized that a clue to guide one out of a portion at least of this labyrinth of uncertainty had long been at hand, albeit unrecognized.

The nature of this clue is set forth in chapter 3, and its discovery constitutes, as I still believe, a substantial advance in our knowledge of the theater of the fifth century. But it is doubtless too much to expect that all of the conclusions drawn therefrom will find general acceptance, particularly the attempted reconstruction of the Sophoclean scene-building (Fig. 31), regarding which I myself entertain many a misgiving. Quite apart, however, from the particular thesis which I have sought to defend and the arguments adduced in its support, the discussion of the various theories regarding the early theater which have been advanced during the past thirty years will perhaps be not without value both to the general reader and to the student who may be seeking a guide to the literature of this highly technical subject. The timely appearance of Professor Flickinger's able book *The Greek Theater and Its Drama* (University of Chicago Press, May, 1918) rendered unnecessary a full discussion of many matters which

would otherwise have been included. But the resulting brevity of the argument is no doubt a distinct advantage.

I wish to thank the University of Chicago Press for the privilege of reproducing a portion of figure 74 of Professor Flickinger's book (Fig. 22). I am indebted also to the generosity of William Heinemann, London (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), for permission to quote from Dr. A. S. Way's admirable translation of Euripides in the Loeb Classical Library; also to George Bell and Sons, London, for a similar favor with reference to the equally able translation of Aristophanes by Dr. B. B. Rogers.

Finally, I regret that as yet I have been unable to procure a copy of Romagnoli's *Il Teatro Greco* (Milan, 1918), but from reviews which I have seen I infer that the author does not treat in detail the problem to which this brief monograph is devoted. I regret also that I have not seen either Frickenhaus' *Die altgriechische Bühne* or Dörpfeld's reply published in *Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie*, 1918.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,

May 12, 1919.



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# THE GREEK THEATER OF THE FIFTH CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

## I

### INTRODUCTION

Every Greek theater consisted normally of three parts: orchestra, auditorium, and scene-building. But these component elements, though essential to the perfected structure, were co-joined by a process of accretion and never in the Hellenic type cohered to form a single architectural unit.

The auditorium (*θέατρον*) was the most conspicuous of these members, and in the majority of instances still remains the most prominent and impressive feature of the theaters whose ruins dot the landscape of the Hellenic world. Although usually somewhat larger than a semicircle and otherwise symmetrical, the auditorium was sometimes quite irregular in shape, as in the theaters at Delos and at Athens and in the tiny and wholly unique theater in the village of Thoricus on the southeastern coast of Attica (Fig. 2). Opposite the auditorium stood the *skene* (*σκηνή*) or scene-building,<sup>1</sup> which served as a background for the actors and provided accommodations for dressing rooms and for the storing of various stage properties. This structure was seldom, if ever, more than two stories in height <sup>2</sup> and was of a rectangular shape, and was connected with the auditorium, if at all, only by a gateway at either end. A handsome example of such a gate

<sup>1</sup> The word meant originally "shelter," "hut." Some writers employ the word "stage-building," but as the fifth-century theater had no stage (p. 36) this term is misleading and should be avoided.

<sup>2</sup> See Fiechter, *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914), p. 35.

was found in the beautiful theater at Epidaurus (Figs. 1, 3). Between the scene-building and the auditorium lay the orchestra area (*ὄρχήστρα*, "dancing place") with its two approaches one from either side, known as the *parodi* (*πάροδος*, "side entrance"), which served not only as passageways for the audience but as

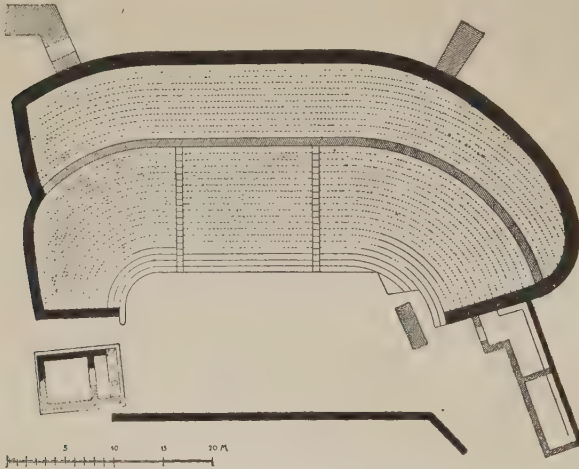


FIG. 2. — PLAN OF THE THEATER AT THORICUS (AFTER DÖRPFELD).

means of entrance and exit for chorus and actors as well. The surface of the orchestra was regularly of earth.<sup>3</sup>

These several component elements are clearly shown in the plan of the fourth-century theater at Athens (Fig. 6). Not until Roman times, however, were they welded into a single structure possessing genuine architectural unity such as appears in the splendid theaters at Orange and Aspendus.

In striking contrast with the Roman theaters and those which were reconstructed under Roman influence, the Greek theaters bespeak their humble origin and the evolutionary character of

<sup>3</sup> The elaborate marble and mosaic pavement in the orchestra at Athens dates from the Roman period. Roman also is the marble balustrade which forms a barrier between the orchestra and the auditorium (Fig. 4).

their development. In point of chronology the orchestra, originally circular, was the earliest portion — the nuclear center of the aggregate. About its circle in the early days the spectators stood or sat during the performance of the choral dances, from which in course of time both tragedy and comedy evolved.<sup>4</sup> The



FIG. 3. — GATEWAY IN THE THEATER AT EPIDAUROS (RESTORED).

first addition to the orchestra was the auditorium, which consisted in early times in part of wooden seats (*ἱκρία*, "bleachers") erected for the purpose, in part no doubt of the rising ground of a convenient hillside. Later these simple accommodations gave way to elaborate structures of masonry, though some theaters, notably that at Oropus, appear never to have abandoned the use of wooden bleachers. The last portion to be added was the

<sup>4</sup> For the latest discussion of the origin of tragedy and comedy see Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), pp. 1-56. See also Donald C. Stuart, "The Origin of Greek Tragedy," *Trans. Amer. Phil. Assoc.* XLVII (1916), 173 ff.



*skene*.<sup>5</sup> This was originally constructed of wood or of some other perishable material and was wholly temporary in character. Not until the close of the fifth century or possibly even later was a *skene* of stone erected. In Hellenistic times the front of the lower story of the scene-building was regularly adorned with a row of columns, surmounted by an entablature and provided with doors or movable panels of wood in the intercolumniations. This feature of the building was known as the *proskenion*, and the question as to its origin and its purpose is one of the most difficult, as well as one of the most important, problems in the history of the scene-building (p. 91). The best preserved example of an Hellenistic *proskenion* is found in the small theater at Priene in Asia Minor (Fig. 5).

The process of development which has just been traced is shown most clearly in the case of the theater in the precinct of Dionysus Eleuthereus on the southeastern slope of the Acropolis at Athens, which so far as is known was the only Greek theater in existence in the fifth century before Christ (Fig. 6).<sup>6</sup> Whether another existed at this time also in the Lenaeum, wherever the Lenaeum was,<sup>7</sup> is disputed. But as we know nothing concerning it, we may dismiss it from consideration.

The antecedents of this theater of Dionysus Eleuthereus are veiled in mystery. There are in our ancient sources certain vague references to an old orchestra in the market place where theatrical performances are said to have been held before the construction of the theater on the slope of the Acropolis.<sup>8</sup> No good reason

<sup>5</sup> Fiechter's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 12) that "bei einem antiken Theaterbau ist wohl stets das Skenengebäude zuerst in Angriff genommen worden, nachher erst der Zuschauerraum" does not apply, and was not intended to apply, to the theater of the fifth century.

<sup>6</sup> The theater at Eretria, as also that at Thoricus (Fig. 2), may date from the closing years of the fifth century. But this is very uncertain; see Dörpfeld, *Das griechische Theater*, pp. 109, 113.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of this difficult problem see Judeich, *Topographie von Athen* (1905), p. 263, note 10; also Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *The Attic Theatre* (ed. 3, 1907), pp. 368 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Photius, s.vv. *ἔκρηα*, *ὀρχήστρα*, and *ληναῖον*. Compare also Plato, *Laws*, 817 c



FIG. 4. — THE THEATER OF DIONYSUS AT ATHENS, LOOKING SOUTH.





appears for disputing this testimony, but we know nothing more concerning the matter, not even the location of the market place itself. We are told, however, by the late lexicographer Suidas that about the year 499 B.C., on the occasion of a contest between the poets Aeschylus, Pratinas, and Choerilus, the wooden seats (*ἵκρια*) upon which the audience was sitting collapsed and that as a result of this accident "a theater was constructed."<sup>9</sup> The precise meaning of this statement cannot be recovered. Very likely Suidas himself could not with certainty have elucidated it. But the inference is perhaps justifiable that until this mishap occurred the Athenians had been content to hold their choral and dramatic festivals in the market place, but that now they decided to construct an auditorium in a more favorable location. If this conjecture, which is adopted by a number of scholars, be sound, the theater in the precinct of Dionysus Eleuthereus dates from about the year 500 B.C. It may be, however, as others believe, that this site had been selected as early as the days of Pisistratus and Thespis (about 534 B.C.) and that the collapse of the bleachers mentioned by Suidas occurred here rather than in the market place.

Be this as it may — the correct interpretation will perhaps never be known — the theater of Dionysus Eleuthereus became in course of time the only theater at Athens. It was here that Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, not to mention the host of other tragic and comic poets of the fifth century, presented most, if not all, of their plays. And it continued in use for dramatic and other performances and spectacles and for various public functions for at least a thousand years. Moreover this theater on the southeastern slope of the Acropolis was the first Greek theater to be developed and became the pattern after

and Hesychius, *s.v.* ἐπὶ Ἀργαίῳ ἁγῶν. This old orchestra may have been the same as the orchestra in the Lenaean. See the preceding note and Judeich, *op. cit.*, pp. 303, 304.

<sup>9</sup> Suidas, *s.v.*, Πρατίνας.

which, though with infinite variety of detail, all subsequent Greek and Roman theaters were modeled. Thus the fifth-century theater at Athens occupies a position of striking importance in the history of architecture; but more than this, because of its dramatic and other religious and secular associations, its appeal to the imagination far surpasses that of any other structure of its kind.

The reconstruction of this ancient building is therefore a most fascinating problem. But it is a dark problem. Some of the factors necessary for its solution are entirely lacking; others again are shrouded in the obscurity of conflicting testimony and fragmentary evidence. In comparison the difficulties that pertain to the Elizabethan theater, perplexing as these are, are simple and easily solved. There are here no contemporaneous pictures corresponding to the rude sketch of the Swan or to the frontispiece of *Messalina*. Stage directions too, which are so useful to the Shakespearean scholar, are few and inconclusive; while even the evidence afforded by the theaters and plays of the succeeding period is incomplete and uncertain. The portion of the problem that still presents the greatest difficulty centers about the *skene* or scene-building, which was constructed of wood and of other perishable materials, and of which therefore no fragment or trace remains. The points at issue concern not only its size, shape, appearance, and the like, but even its location, and have been the occasion of a protracted controversy. A complete solution of the difficulties involved is no doubt impossible of attainment. But a study of the ruins of the fourth-century *skene* and of the few surviving fragments of the fifth-century theater, supplemented by evidence derived from other kindred structures and from an examination of the dramatic literature of the fifth century, makes the recovery of some of the essential factors reasonably possible.

This is the problem and these the questions with which this treatise is chiefly concerned. As a convenient point of departure



FIG. 5. — THE THEATER AT PRIENE.





let us begin with a brief description of the fourth-century theater.<sup>10</sup> We shall then turn back to the earlier structure and show that the remains of the fourth-century theater furnish a key for the reconstruction of certain features of the building as it existed in the days of Sophocles. An examination of the literary evidence will then be necessary, and this will lead in turn to a criticism of various theories which have been proposed. Out of this there will develop a discussion of the origin of the *proskenion* which is so prominent a feature of the Hellenistic theater. In conclusion we shall propose as a reasonable hypothesis that the *proskenion* was in point of origin the *skene* itself of the Aeschylean theater.

<sup>10</sup> The history of the Athenian theater may be roughly divided into the following periods: (1) The fifth century B.C.; (2) the fourth and third centuries B.C.; (3) the second and first centuries B.C.—the Hellenistic period; (4) the first and second centuries A.D.—the Neronian theater; and (5) the third and fourth centuries A.D.—the Phaedrian remodelment. The last two divisions taken together constitute the Roman period. For a description of the Hellenistic and Roman reconstructions, see Dörpfeld, *Das griechische Theater*, pp. 73-96; Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *The Attic Theatre* (1907), pp. 87, 88; Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama*, pp. 70 ff.

## II

### THE FOURTH-CENTURY THEATER AT ATHENS <sup>11</sup>

During the fifth century B.C. the theater in the precinct of Dionysus Eleuthereus became by the processes of external accretion and expansion a structure of considerable magnitude. But even until the close of the century apparently both auditorium and scene-building alike continued to be unpretentious erections of wood.<sup>12</sup> In sharp contrast with this earlier building the new theater of the fourth century was in the main an edifice of stone and marble. The date when this reconstruction was begun cannot at present be determined with certainty, but it appears

<sup>11</sup> Selected bibliography :

- Dörpfeld und Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896), pp. 36 ff. This book, in spite of repeated attacks by Bethe, Puchstein, Petersen, Furtwängler and others, still remains the most authoritative treatise on the Athenian theater.
- Puchstein, *Die griechische Bühne* (1901), pp. 1-45, 100 ff., 131 ff. The author of this study according to his own confession (p. 2) ignored the evidence afforded by the dramatic literature. But not with impunity; his conclusions are either wholly unsound or open to serious question. Reviewed by Dörpfeld in *Athenische Mittheilungen*, XXVIII (1903), 385 ff., and by Robert in *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLXIV (1902), 413 ff.
- Furtwängler, "Zum Dionysostheater in Athen," *S.-B. d. philos.-philol. u. d. histor. Classe d. k. b. Akad. d. Wiss., München* (1901), pp. 411 ff. Devoted chiefly to a discussion of the date of the reconstruction of the theater.
- Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *The Attic Theatre* (ed. 3, 1907), pp. 86 ff. Although useful, this book is marred by many faults. Happily it has recently been superseded (see below).
- Fiechter, *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914), pp. 9 ff. and *passim*. A stimulating and beautifully illustrated treatise; some of its conclusions, however, cannot be accepted.
- Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), pp. 57 ff. This is not only the most recent discussion of the Greek theater and its problems, but without question also the best.

For additional titles and other references see the following footnotes.

<sup>12</sup> Some scholars however, notably Puchstein (*op. cit.*, pp. 138, 139), and Furtwängler (*op. cit.*), have maintained that the auditorium was reconstructed wholly or partially of stone before the close of the fifth century. It is possible further that the stone foundations of the fourth-century *skene* were laid before the year 400. For a discussion of this matter see the end of this chapter (p. 18).



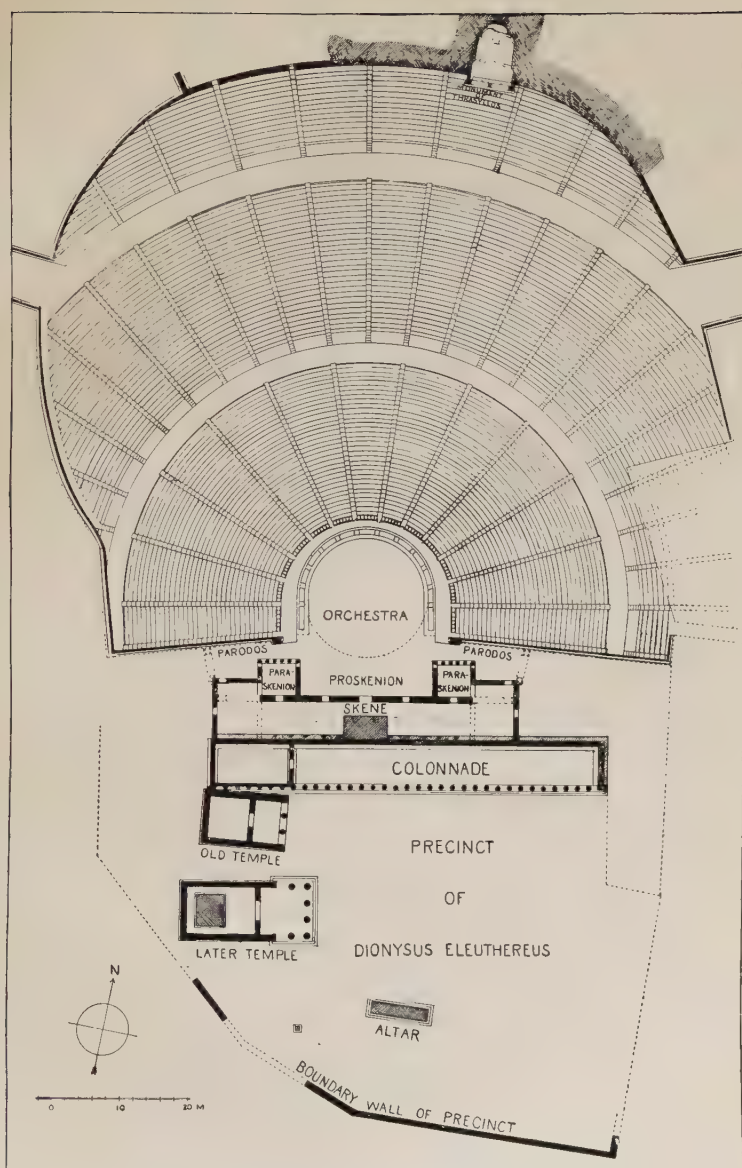


FIG. 6. — PLAN OF THE FOURTH-CENTURY THEATER AND THE PRECINCT OF DIONYSUS ELEUTHEREUS AT ATHENS (AFTER DÖRPFELD, MODIFIED).



to have been brought to completion under the able administration of Lycurgus, who was finance minister of Athens between the years 338 and 326 B.C.<sup>13</sup> For this reason the fourth-century theater is frequently referred to as the theater of Lycurgus or as the Lycurgean theater.<sup>14</sup> A plan of this building together with the precinct of Dionysus is shown in figure 6. Be it noted however that the large colonnade which adjoins the scene-building is not a part of the theater itself but belongs rather to the precinct.

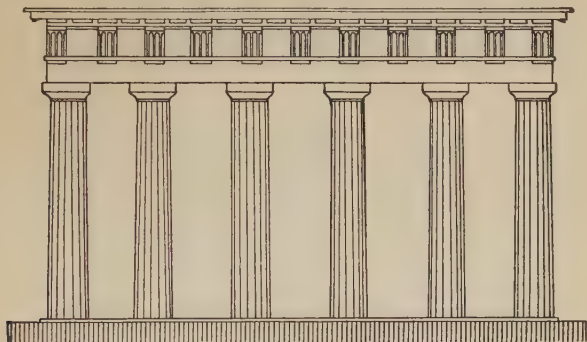


FIG. 7. — DORIC FAÇADE OF ONE OF THE *Paraskenia* OF THE LYCURGEAN THEATER AT ATHENS (AFTER FIECHTER).

The orchestra-area was composed of two parts: its northern half was a semicircle; its southern half, a rectangle. The portion inclosed by the auditorium was surrounded by an open gutter which was bridged by stone slabs placed opposite the aisles. The surface of the orchestra was of earth, and its diameter, as determined by the inner circumference of the gutter, was 19.61

<sup>13</sup> See Pseudo-Plutarch, *X Oratorum Vitae*, 841 D and 852 C; also Hyperides, *Orat. deperd.* 118 (Kenyon); Pausanias I, 29, 16; and CIA II, 240.

<sup>14</sup> Puchstein (*op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff.) sought to prove that the erection of the permanent marble *proskenion* and the introduction of other changes in the scene-building, which Dörpfeld assigned to the Hellenistic period, were effected during the administration of Lycurgus. But this hypothesis has met with little favor; see Fiechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13. Versakis ("Das Skenengebäude des Dionysos-Theaters," *Jahrbuch d. arch. Instituts*, XXIV (1909), pp. 194 ff.) tried, though in vain, to connect the figures of the Neronian (and Phaedrian) frieze with this period (pp. 214 ff.).

meters or sixty-four feet, four inches. This is equal to sixty Aeginetan-Attic feet of 12.87 inches (.327 m.) each, a fact that is believed by Dörpfeld to be "significant as showing that the orchestra was the starting point in the measurements and not incidentally derived from some other part of the theater."<sup>15</sup> As we shall see later (p. 31) the orchestra-area of the fifth-century theater had the same diameter. Whether the circle of the orchestra was ever made complete and indicated by means of a curbing, as in the theater at Epidaurus (Fig. 1), is not known. The parodi at their narrowest points were about eight and a half feet (2.60 m.) in width.<sup>16</sup>

The vast auditorium with its massive retaining walls, its row of handsome marble thrones and its tier upon tier of seats need not be described in detail. As the plan shows, it was quite irregular in shape, and extended upward to the scarp of the Acropolis. It provided accommodation for at least fourteen thousand persons.<sup>17</sup> In ancient times a roadway which skirted the Acropolis close under its cliff had crossed the site of the theater. The earliest auditorium probably did not extend beyond this line (p. 23), but sooner or later the road came to be incorporated in the theater as a *diazoma* (passageway). In the Lycurgean auditorium the level of this *diazoma* was about twenty-six feet above that of the original road (Fig. 17) and the sweep of its curve was consequently made greater that it might conform the more exactly to the contour of the tiers of seats. We may note further that the curve of the rows of seats in the lower portion of the auditorium was not the same as that of the orchestra. The spaces on either side between the gutter and the row of thrones grew gradually

<sup>15</sup> The quotation is from Flickinger (*op. cit.*, p. 69), but is a paraphrase of Dörpfeld's statement (*Das griechische Theater*, p. 59).

<sup>16</sup> It may be mentioned in passing that the scale of measurement given by Dörpfeld (*op. cit.*, Taf. 2), is incorrect. It should be the same as that for Tafel 1; compare Tafeln 3 and 4.

<sup>17</sup> If only sixteen inches were allowed for each person the seating capacity would have been about seventeen thousand (Dörpfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 44).



wider as one approached the parodi. This was no doubt a convenient arrangement as facilitating the entrance and exit of the spectators; an explanation of its origin will be proposed in connection with the discussion of the earlier theater (p. 35).

But the problems that concern the orchestra and the auditorium are simple indeed in comparison with those which confront us when we undertake to restore the scene-building. Many factors essential to its reconstruction have been lost beyond recovery. Extensive portions of the foundation walls and a few scattered bits of the superstructure alone have been preserved; the remainder can be restored only by conjecture. It was a large



FIG. 8. — GROUND PLAN OF THE FIFTH-CENTURY *Skene* OF THE THEATER AT ATHENS AS CONJECTURALLY RESTORED BY FIECHTER.

rectangular structure one hundred fifty-two feet in length and twenty-one feet deep at the center. At the ends of this shallower portion two wings, each about sixteen and one-half feet in depth and twenty-three feet wide, and known as *paraskenia*, projected toward the auditorium. The front of each of the *paraskenia* was adorned with six small Doric columns and a simple Doric frieze (Fig. 7), from the fragments of which Dörpfeld was able to calculate with approximate accuracy the height of these projecting wings and therefore the height of the first story of the entire scene-building. This was about thirteen feet.

The reconstruction, however, of these *paraskenia* is involved in difficulties. The massiveness of the foundations is puzzling, and would seem to have been intended for a more substantial superstructure than a colonnade. Possibly, as Fiechter sug-

gests,<sup>18</sup> this had been at first a solid wall (Fig. 8). The nature of the sides also is in doubt. From the appearance of a corner-piece of the architrave Dörpfeld concluded<sup>19</sup> that the sides as well as the front were adorned with columns (Fig. 9). But Fiechter<sup>20</sup> denies the validity of this conclusion and restores the sides rather as walls terminating in antae (Fig. 10). Dörpfeld further conjectured that a colonnade extended also along the front of the *skene* between the columnated *paraskenia* (Fig. 9), but this proposal also has been repeatedly and vigorously attacked, and no longer has the support even of Dörpfeld himself.<sup>21</sup> What

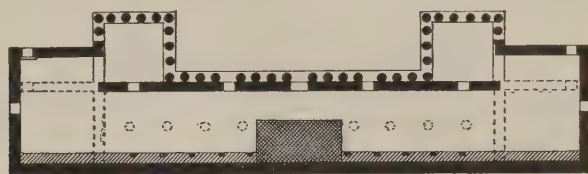


FIG. 9. — GROUND PLAN OF THE FOURTH-CENTURY *Skene* OF THE THEATER AT ATHENS AS RESTORED BY DÖRPFELD.

then was the appearance of this central portion of the *skene*? No one can say with certainty. The foundations furnish no clue. Instead of the three doors conjecturally restored by Dörpfeld (Fig. 9) on the analogy of the scene-building at Eretria, there may have been actually but one door; while Fiechter has recently proposed an entirely different arrangement.<sup>22</sup> The front of the upper story of the Hellenistic theater at Oropus consisted of five large openings with four intervening piers (Fig. 11). The Hellenistic reconstruction of the theater at Ephesus had seven such

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 65 and fig. 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 100, 101. Compare also Puchstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 ff., 131 ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst., Anzeiger*, XXVIII (1913), 38.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 34 ff., 66 ff.

openings, and traces of a similar construction are said to have been found also at Priene. From these facts Fiechter makes the precarious deduction that the façade of the scene-building in the fourth century consisted in its central portion of a series of open spaces and massive piers. In conformity with this theory he explains the Hellenistic *proskenion* as an extraneous addition imported from southern Italy. A glance at his restoration of the Lycurgean *skene* (Fig. 12), however, is sufficient to insure its

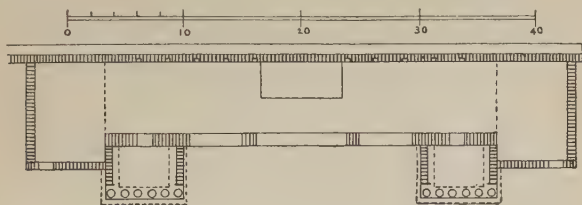


FIG. 10. — GROUND PLAN OF THE FOURTH-CENTURY *Skene* OF THE THEATER AT ATHENS AS RESTORED BY FIECHTER.

rejection, while the hypothesis by which he eliminates the embarrassing *proskenion* is merely an adroit subterfuge (see further p. 109).

The space inclosed by the façade of the scene-building and the two *paraskenia*, it is generally assumed, was occupied during the dramatic performances by a temporary erection of wood. According to certain scholars this was a stage (cf. Fig. 12); in the judgment of others, a variable background. Both views are based solely on conjecture; not a trace of either of the assumed constructions remains to dispel uncertainty. But the advocates of the second theory have the stronger case. The assumption of a stage in the fourth century, as also in the fifth, is supported only by a series of unconvincing hypotheses and will not, I believe, be able much longer to weather the storm of criticism which it has provoked.<sup>23</sup> The alternative theory, like the first, appears

<sup>23</sup> For an admirable presentation of the arguments on which this conclusion is based, together with a brief bibliography of the controversy, see Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-103 and also pp. 59, 60. As will be seen below, however (p. 36),

in more than one form. According to Dörpfeld this background, to which he applies the term *proskenion*, consisted at times of a row of posts or columns with panels between, at other times of more distinctively realistic erections, or again only of large painted screens (*Schmuckwände*). The dramas of this period, he observes, demanded for their adequate presentation several different types

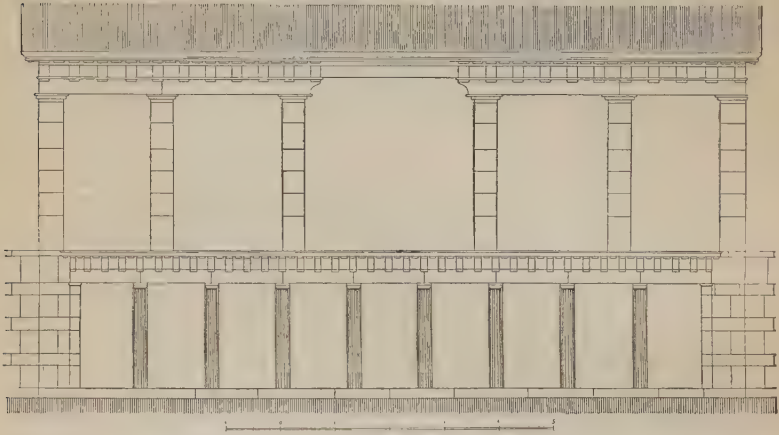


FIG. 11. — FRONT ELEVATION OF THE SCENE-BUILDING AT OROPUS AS RESTORED BY FIECHTER.

of settings, from which he concludes that "these various decorations must have been provided by means of movable *proskenia* of wholly different forms (*Diese verschiedenen Dekorationen mussten durch bewegliche Proskenen von ganz verschiedener Form gebildet werden*)."<sup>24</sup> But the majority of those who believe that a *proskenion* occupied the space between the *paraskenia* in the Lycurgean theater hold that it was already of the conventional type found

I do not agree with the author in his interpretation of *ἀναβαλναι* and *καταβαλναι* (p. 91). For a statement of the arguments on the opposing side, see Haigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff. The most recent defense of the stage-theory, so far as I am aware, is that by Petersen, *Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915), pp. 539 ff. See my review of this treatise in *Class. Phil.* XIII (1918), 216 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Das griechische Theater* (1896), p. 376. See further page 92 below, where Dörpfeld's theory of the *proskenion* will be discussed in detail.



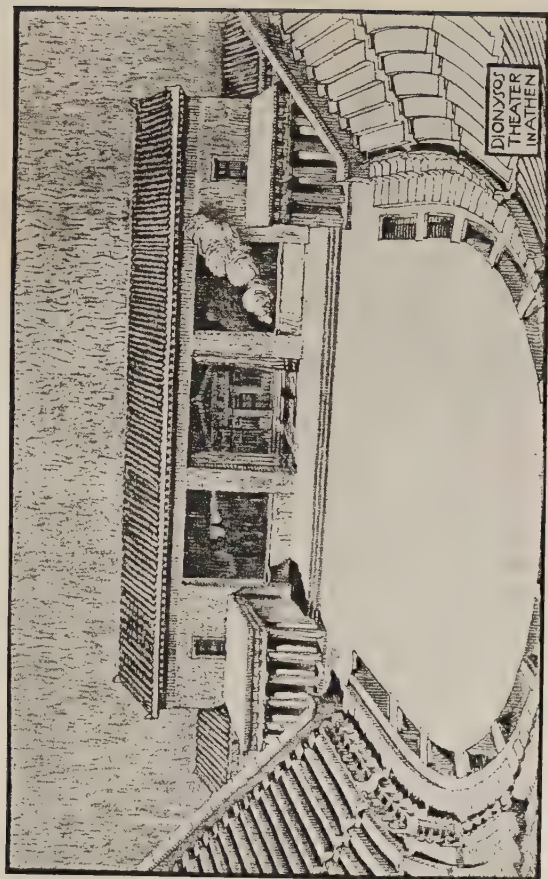


FIG. 12.— THE SCENE-BUILDING OF THE THEATER AT ATHENS (FIRST HALF OF THE FOURTH CENTURY) AS RESTORED BY FIECHTER.



regularly in the Hellenistic scene-building, as at Oropus (Fig. 11), Priene (Fig. 5) and at Athens itself (Fig. 13). In other words, it was a simple colonnade with a flat, or nearly flat, roof, and the spaces between its columns could be closed by means of wooden panels (*πίνακες*) or left open in accordance with the varying scenic requirements. But the material of the entire structure was wood, not in part stone or marble as regularly in the Hellenistic period.<sup>25</sup>

This theory is, I believe, the only one that can be considered tenable. It makes possible a saner explanation of the origin of the Hellenistic *proskēnion* than does any other hypothesis

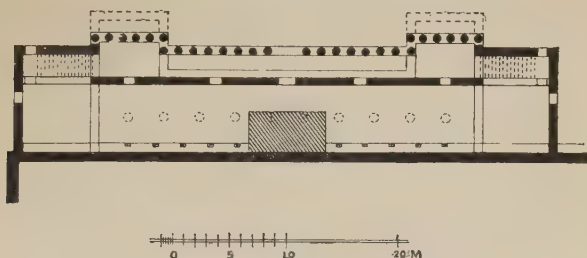


FIG. 13. — GROUND PLAN OF THE HELLENISTIC SCENE-BUILDING AT ATHENS (AFTER DÖRPFELD).

and is supported by the discovery of traces of a similar construction in the theaters at Sicyon, Megalopolis, and elsewhere. Moreover, there have been found certain Delian inscriptions of the early third century, which refer to the old wooden scene-building at Delos and which mention the *proskēnion* and its panels.<sup>26</sup> This is sufficient to justify the assumption of a similar erection in the theater at Athens; and that a *proskēnion* of some kind was already in existence in the days of Lycurgus is proved by the

<sup>25</sup> Puchstein assigned the permanent *proskēnion* to the fourth century; see above, note 14. It should be observed that some scholars, of whom Puchstein was one, have accepted the assumption of a conventional *proskēnion* in the fourth century, but have interpreted it as a stage, not as a background for the actors. This is merely one form of the stage-theory mentioned above; see note 23.

<sup>26</sup> The dates of these particular inscriptions are 290 and 282 B.C. See Homolle, *Bulletin de corres. hell.* (1894), 161 ff.; Haigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 379 ff.

fact that the famous courtesan Nannion, who is frequently mentioned by fourth-century writers, was nicknamed "Proskenion," "because," as Harpocration records,<sup>27</sup> "outwardly she appeared more comely." This rather enigmatic explanation is happily elucidated by the fuller statement in Athenaeus,<sup>28</sup> that "Nannion was called 'Proskenion' because she had a pretty face and adorned herself with rich garments and ornaments of gold, but when she removed her garments she was most ill-favored to look upon." Some scholars see in these statements a reference to painted scenery, but the Delian inscriptions mentioned above are sufficient to disprove this interpretation.<sup>29</sup>

We assume then that a temporary wooden *proskenion* was employed in the fourth-century theater. It would be of the same height as the first story of the scene-building and its columns would harmonize with those of the two *paraskenia*. In the Hellenistic reconstruction, which so far as is known consisted chiefly in the erection of a permanent colonnade and in the curtailment of the *paraskenia* (Fig. 13),<sup>30</sup> the columns of the *proskenion* were set at a distance of about four feet back of the front line of the wings. And it is a reasonable conjecture that in the Lycurean scene-building also they occupied the same relative position. For, as will be shown in the next chapter (p. 30), up to this time at least, the development of the theater after its main features

<sup>27</sup> S.v. Νάννιον. . . . Ἀντιφάνης δὲ ὁ νεώτερος ἐν τῷ περὶ ἑταιρῶν τὴν Νάννιον φησι Προσκήνιον ἐπονομάζεσθαι διὰ τὸ ἔξωθεν δοκεῖν εὐμορφότεραν εἶναι.

<sup>28</sup> XIII, 587 b: Προσκήνιον ἐπεκαλεῖτο ἡ Νάννιον, ὅτι πρόσωπόν τε ἀστείων εἶχε καὶ ἐχρήτο χρυσοῖς καὶ ἱματίοις πολυτελέσι, ἐκδύσα δὲ ἦν αἰσχροτάτη.

<sup>29</sup> Moreover this interpretation would be possible only if Nannion had been called σκηνή, not προσκήνιον. Furthermore, the expressions employed, ἐκδύσα and τὸ ἔξωθεν εὐμορφότεραν (which implies τὸ ἐνδοθεν αἰσχροτάτη), would hardly have been suitable if applied to painted scenes, but were entirely fitting if the speaker or writer had in mind a structure that within was rough and unfinished, but outwardly was pleasing to the eye.

Petersen's explanation of the *proskenion* (*op. cit.*, pp. 540 ff.) is quite impossible of acceptance.

<sup>30</sup> Their façades were moved back about six and a quarter feet. Fiechter (*op. cit.*, pp. 9 ff.) defends Dörpfeld in this matter (*Das griechische Theater*, p. 63) and rejects the heresies of Bethe (*Götting. Gel. Anz.*, CLIX (1897), 720 ff.), Puchstein (*op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff.), and Petersen (*Jahrb. d. arch. Inst.*, XXIII (1890), 33 ff.).



were once established had been conservatively evolutions in character rather than marked by radical changes.<sup>31</sup>

So far nothing has been said about the upper story of the scene-building. That there was a second story is proved by the fact that even before the close of the fifth century certain plays demanded such a superstructure for their presentation (see p. 59). But regarding its size and appearance nothing is known. It may be, as Fiechter contends, that it resembled the upper portion of the Hellenistic scene-buildings at Oropus and Ephesus, the façades of which, as we saw above, consisted of a series of large openings and piers (p. 13 and Fig. 11). But this is wholly conjectural. Within the main hall of the *skene* stood a row of supporting columns, apparently ten in number, but these are not certainly assignable to the Lysurgian period.<sup>32</sup> There was also in this hall a massive foundation (Fig. 6), but its purpose still remains in doubt. Finally at the back of the hall there ran a low wall, in the upper surface of which were cut large rectangular holes at regular intervals. As an explanation of this mysterious construction Dörpfeld originally suggested that the upper story of the scene-building was of wood and that these holes were intended to receive its massive supporting beams. Later, however, he ventured the conjecture that in the early years of the fourth century the lower story was of wood and that this wall served as its support.<sup>33</sup> Possibly, as Fiechter suggests,<sup>34</sup> this wall was constructed before the close of the fifth century. But this is still quite uncertain.

<sup>31</sup> As Flickinger remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 70): "this fourth-century structure probably reproduced in stone the main outlines of the earlier theater in which the later tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and all the plays of Aristophanes were performed." I have shown in my article, "The Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth-Century Theater at Athens" (*Univ. Calif. Publ. Class. Phil.*, V, 55 ff., May, 1918), that this is certainly the case.

<sup>32</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 61; *Athenische Mitteilungen*, XXXII (1907), 231. Versakis (*Jahrb. d. arch. Inst.*, XXIV (1909), 223, 224), argued that its purpose was to strengthen the rear wall of the *skene*.

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 11 (see fig. 8, above).

At a distance of about sixty-five feet to the south of the scene-building were discovered the foundations of the new temple of Dionysus, for which the famous sculptor Alcamenes made a colossal chryselephantine statue of the god. Pausanias, who made an extended journey through Greece about the middle of the second century after Christ, mentions both the temple and the statue in his account of Athens (I, 20, 3). As Alcamenes flourished during the latter half of the fifth century, his last recorded work being a group to commemorate the victory of Thrasybulus and his compatriots over the Thirty Tyrants in 403, it is probable that this temple was erected either before the close of this century or very shortly thereafter. Its foundation consisted of blocks of breccia or conglomerate, a material that was not employed at Athens for this purpose until after the death of Pericles (429 B.C.). It follows therefore that the date of the temple falls between the years 425 and 390 B.C. Furtwängler<sup>35</sup> and Gardner<sup>36</sup> assign it to the Peace of Nicias (421-415 B.C.). But possibly it was not erected until after the battle of Cyzicus (410 B.C.), when under the leadership of the demagogue Cleophon (410-404 B.C.) the Athenians for a brief interval, fatuously confident that the democracy had been completely restored, turned once more to the architectural adornment of their city. Among the activities of this period was included the completion of the beautiful temple on the Acropolis known as the Erechtheum.

The bearing of this apparent digression is clear when we note that the foundations of the scene-building and of the adjacent colonnade were similar to those of this new temple. Moreover these three structures appear to have been arranged in accordance with a single plan; the temple is virtually parallel to the portico and the *skene*.<sup>37</sup> For these reasons the erection of the new theater

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 413.

<sup>36</sup> E. A. Gardner, *Ancient Athens* (1902), pp. 31, 435, 436.

<sup>37</sup> Dörpfeld in *Das griechische Theater*, Tafel 2, represents them as exactly parallel, but in Tafel 1, which is presumably more accurate (Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*, 1905, p. 279, note 6), the lines slightly diverge. See also

is conjecturally assigned by some scholars to the closing decades of the fifth century.<sup>38</sup> Fiechter however accepts this conclusion only so far as concerns the foundations; the scene-building itself may still have been a wooden structure.<sup>39</sup> Only the recovery of certain factors which are now missing will make a definitive decision possible. Until then, as Fiechter rightly observes, we must continue to grope in the dark.

Noack, *Σκηνή Τραγική, Eine Studie über die scenischen Anlagen auf der Orchestra des Aischylos und der anderen Tragikern* (1915), p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Furtwängler (*op. cit.*) proposed the years 421–413 B.C. Gardner (*op. cit.*, pp. 435, 436, 448) says "perhaps as early as 420 B.C."; see also Puchstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff. Dörpfeld had suggested the years 350–330 B.C.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 11, 12. See also Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

### III

#### THE THEATER OF THE FIFTH CENTURY<sup>40</sup>

The splendid theater of the days of Lycurgus and Menander, though built in the main of limestone and marble, admits of but a partial reconstruction. How much greater the difficulties encountered when we undertake to restore the less substantial building of the time of Pericles! Of this structure almost nothing has been preserved; yet this little when examined closely tells an extraordinarily fascinating story. Indeed even the meagerness of the remains is itself significant, for it proves beyond a doubt that the building was constructed in greater part of perishable materials.

The foundations of our knowledge of the fifth-century theater were first securely laid by Dörpfeld when in the winter of 1885-86 he discovered beneath the inner end of the eastern parodos of the Lycurgean theater a curvilinear cutting in the bedrock and underneath the ruins of the scene-building two portions of an ancient retaining wall (Fig. 14, V, R, and Q, respectively). The stones which constitute the larger of these pieces of wall (R)

<sup>40</sup> Selected bibliography:  
von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Die Bühne des Aischylos," *Hermes*, XXI (1886), 597 ff. This was the first attempt to interpret the early plays of Aeschylus in accordance with Dörpfeld's discoveries; it has exercised a profound influence upon subsequent discussions of Aeschylean dramaturgy.  
Todt, "Noch Einmal die Bühne des Aeschylos," *Philologus*, XLVIII (1889), 505 ff.; reactionary and unconvincing.  
Dörpfeld und Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896), pp. 24 ff., 176 ff., 366 ff.  
Haigh, *The Attic Theater* (ed. 3, 1907), pp. 80 ff.  
Noack, *Σκηνή Τραγική, eine Studie über die scenischen Anlage auf der Orchestra des Aischylos und der anderen Tragikern* (1915); disappointing on the side of dramatic interpretation.  
Allen, "The Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth-Century Theater at Athens," *Univ. Calif. Publ. Class. Phil.* V (1918), 55 ff.  
Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), pp. 63 ff.

For other references see the following footnotes.



are carefully fitted together in the polygonal style of masonry and their exterior surface was evidently intended to be seen. This surface moreover forms a circular arc (Fig. 15) from which Dörpfeld was enabled to calculate to a nicety the diameter of the circle of which it was originally a portion. This was about twenty-four meters or about seventy-eight feet, nine inches. And when the circle thus indicated was described, it not only included the second piece of wall (*Q*) but passed over the cutting

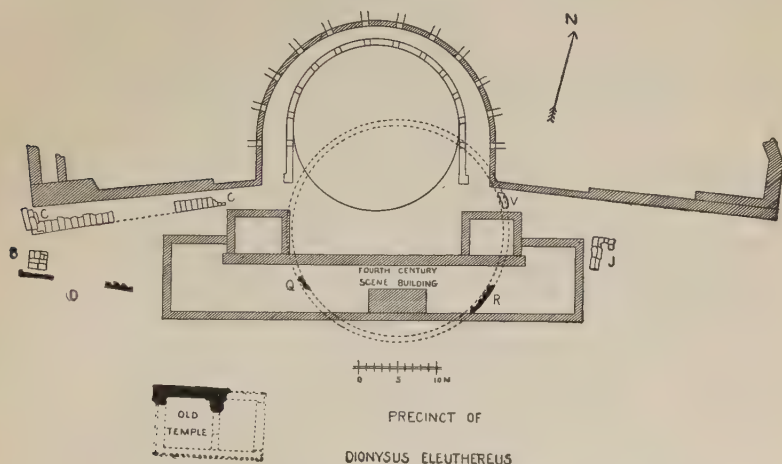


FIG. 14. — PLAN SHOWING THE REMAINS OF THE FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER AT ATHENS (AFTER DÖRPFELD).

in the rock at *V* as well. From these facts Dörpfeld drew the conclusion that there had anciently existed here a wall inclosing a circular space the southern portion of which formed a terrace. And as portions of the native rock within this circle were found standing almost to the level of the fourth-century orchestra, the surface of this old terrace must have been of approximately the same height. The southernmost arc of the terrace therefore stood about two meters or six and a half feet above the sloping terrain (Fig. 16), while its northernmost portion formed a slight depression in the hillside. The material and the workmanship

of the retaining wall show that this terrace cannot have been constructed much later than the year 500 B.C. and may have been built several decades earlier. Dörpfeld concluded therefore that this circular terrace was the orchestra of the early fifth-century theater, and this conclusion has met with universal acceptance.

It is customary accordingly to refer to this terrace as the orchestra, but for reasons which will be explained presently I shall adopt the designation "orchestra-terrace." Whether it was

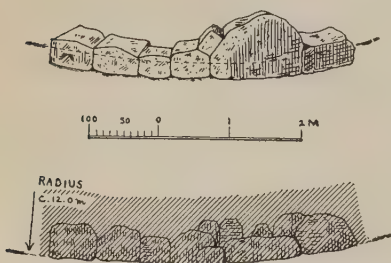


FIG. 15. — GROUND PLAN AND ELEVATION OF A PORTION OF THE RETAINING WALL (FIG. 14, R) OF THE OLD ORCHESTRA-TERRACE (AFTER DÖRPFELD).

originally designed to serve as the orchestra of the theater is not certain; Gardner suggests that "possibly it was an early threshing floor."<sup>41</sup> But it should be noted that the outer diameter of this terrace was about fourteen feet, five inches greater than that of the Lycurgean orchestra (p. 9), and further that the latter occupied only in part the site of

the orchestra-terrace. When the theater was reconstructed, therefore, it was moved about thirty feet to the north,<sup>42</sup> so as to make room for the new scene-building and its adjacent colonnade (Fig. 6) and to utilize to better advantage the declivity of the Acropolis. At the same time its axis was shifted about eight feet toward the west (Fig. 14).

<sup>41</sup> E. A. Gardner, *Ancient Athens* (1902), p. 123. My colleague, Professor O. M. Washburn, doubts this, for the reason that threshing floors were regularly constructed in very windy places.

<sup>42</sup> This figure is obtained by measuring the distance between the inner curve of the gutter of the fourth-century orchestra and the northernmost arc of the orchestra-terrace. It is customary to state (Dörpfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 28; so Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 68; and others) that the theater was moved northward about fifty feet, which is the distance between the southernmost points of the two circles. But this mode of reckoning can be shown, I believe, to be incorrect (p. 32).

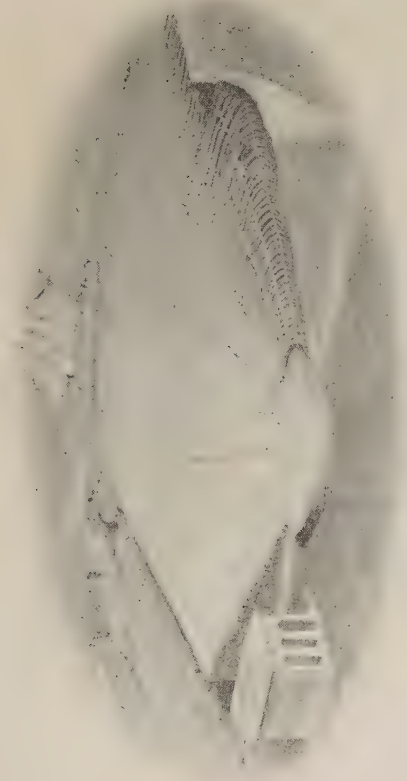


FIG. 16. — CONJECTURAL RESTORATION OF THE EARLY FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER AT ATHENS SHOWING THE ORCHESTRA-TERRACE WITH ADJOINING PARODI AND THE OLD TEMPLE OF DIONYSUS. THE SIZE, SHAPE AND GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THE AUDITORIUM ARE WHOLLY UNCERTAIN. (PHOTOGRAPH FROM A RUDE MODEL MADE BY THE AUTHOR.)





A little way down the slope, about thirty-six feet southwest of the terrace-wall, stood the small sixth-century temple of Dionysus Eleuthereus (Figs. 14 and 16). In its cella was kept the ancient wooden statue of the god, which had been brought from Eleutherae to Athens and for whose priest was reserved the chief seat in the neighboring theater (Pausanias, I, 20, 2; and 38, 8).

Excavations conducted in the central portion of the auditorium in the year 1889 revealed the fact that during the fifth century the natural slope of the hillside at this point had been gradually increased by the addition of successive layers of soil (Fig. 17). An examination of the fragments of pottery, which were discovered in the different strata, showed beyond question that the lowest of these layers must have been put in place before the middle of this century (*i.e.* before about 450 B.C.),<sup>43</sup> and that the other strata were not superposed until later; from which it is clear that the acclivity of the early auditorium was not so great as in later times. The difference between the gradient of the Aeschylean theater and that of the fourth century is roughly indicated in figure 17. And the ancient roadway which crossed the site of the auditorium was gradually raised and the sweep of its curve increased until in the Lycurgean theater it formed a broad *diazoma* some twenty-six feet above its original level (p. 10, and Figs. 6 and 17). It appears therefore to be a reasonable conjecture that in the time of Aeschylus the auditorium did not extend beyond this road.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from this early fill beneath the auditorium the vestiges of the orchestra-terrace are the only remains that can be assigned with certainty to the theater of Aeschylus. West of the terrace, however, were uncovered two pieces of an ancient wall (Fig. 14, *D*), which evidently had been erected early in the fifth century. But whether this wall was a part of the theater is not certain. Dörp-

<sup>43</sup> Schneider, "Vase des Xenocles und Kleisophos," *Athen. Mitth.*, XIV (1889), 329 ff., especially p. 333; Dörpfeld, *Das griechische Theater*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>44</sup> So also Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 66, note 1.

- D Old Temple of Dionysus Eleuthereus.
- LL' Lycourgean Auditorium.
- OO' Fourth-Century Orchestra.
- ST' Fifth-Century Orchestra after the Erection of the *Skene*.
- TT' Old Orchestra-Terrace.
- VV' Aeschylean Auditorium.

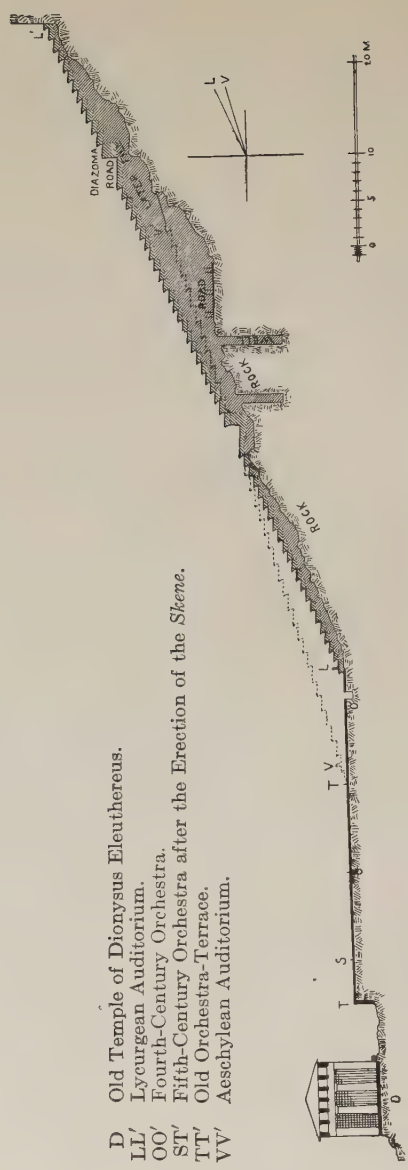


FIG. 17. — CROSS SECTION OF THE THEATER AT ATHENS, SHOWING THE ORCHESTRA-TERRACE, THE POSITION OF THE OLD TEMPLE OF DIONYSUS AND THE DIFFERENCE IN GRADIENTS OF THE AESCHYLEAN AND THE LYCOURGEAN THEATERS (IN PART AFTER DÖRPFELD).

feld conjectured that it may have been a retaining wall for the western parodus,<sup>45</sup> and I shall point out presently certain reasons for believing this explanation to be correct (see below, p. 33). The alternative suggestion that it may have been a portion of the auditorium can easily be shown to be untenable.<sup>46</sup> The purpose of two other pieces of ancient masonry which were discovered in the area of the theater (Fig. 14, *B*, and *J*) cannot be determined. Equally obscure is the significance of some traces of a foundation in the western parodus.<sup>47</sup> Gardner assigns them to the fifth-century theater and calls them "foundations of passage."<sup>48</sup> Puchstein regarded them rather as a portion of the foundations of a pre-Lycurgean auditorium.<sup>49</sup>

At the southwestern corner of the fourth-century auditorium was found a stone marked with the letters *O* and *X* and bearing an inscription written in the Attic alphabet of the latter half of the fifth century: ΒΟΛΗΞ ΥΠΗΡΕΤΟΝ, "of the servants of the senate" (Fig. 18). This stone was built into the wall in inverted position

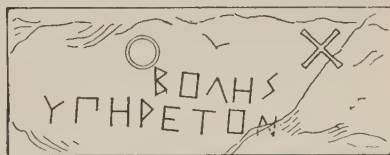


FIG. 18. — STONE WITH INSCRIPTION FOUND IN THE THEATER AT ATHENS.

and had evidently been intended for another place and purpose. It has accordingly been accepted by a not inconsiderable number of scholars as evidence of the existence of a stone auditorium before the close of the fifth century.<sup>50</sup> But the rela-

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 31. Noack (*op. cit.*, p. 5) says: "Die Mauer D kann schlechterdings nichts anderes als eine Stützmauer für einen Rampenweg bedeuten."

<sup>46</sup> Originally proposed by Dörpfeld (*op. cit.*, pp. 28, 31), this explanation is frequently mentioned as a possibility, as by Judeich (*Topographie von Athen* (1905), p. 276), and Haigh (*op. cit.*, p. 85).

<sup>47</sup> These lie immediately to the south of the retaining wall of the western wing of the auditorium (fig. 14, *CC*). Dörpfeld (*Das griechische Theater*) indicates them in Tafeln 1 and 3, but does not mention them in his text.

<sup>48</sup> *Ancient Athens* (1902), p. 436.

<sup>49</sup> *Die griechische Bühne* (1901), p. 138.

<sup>50</sup> So e.g., Furtwängler, *op. cit.*, pp. 414, 415; Puchstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 139; Müller, *Das attische Bühnenwesen* (1902), pp. 35, 36.

tion of this stone to the theater is still problematic, as is true also of still another fragment bearing the broken inscription Ο ΚΕΡΥΟΝ.<sup>51</sup> As this inscription however does not admit of an interpretation and as the stone on which it appears was not found in the theater, it sheds no light upon our problem and may accordingly be dismissed from consideration.

This completes the enumeration of the certain and the conjectural remains of the fifth-century theater. If this were the sum total of the evidence at our command, there construction of that early building would indeed be impossible. That it is at least partially feasible, we owe to the theater of the fourth century, whose ruins were described in the preceding chapter. Ever since the discovery of the old orchestra-terrace in the winter of 1885-86 scholars have believed that the structure of which this was once a part must have come to resemble more or less closely the stone edifice that was erected in its place during the fourth century. But the failure to observe a certain striking relationship between the ruins of these two structures gave rise to a number of divergent hypotheses, no one of which could with positiveness be declared to be correct. The attitude of those who have attempted to solve the problem is reflected in the recent remark of Fiechter (which however in its context has reference specifically to the *skene*): "what the building looked like, no one knows."<sup>52</sup> The chief points in dispute concern the shape and size of the auditorium, the position of the parodi and the angle which these formed with the axis of the theater, and finally the location, size, and appearance of the scene-building. For years rival theories have been contending for the mastery with no umpire to decide the issue.

The solution of some of these problems, however, has lain ready to hand, albeit unobserved, since the publication of *Das griechische Theater* three and twenty years ago. And it can be

<sup>51</sup> CIA, IV (supp.), 555 b.

<sup>52</sup> *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914), p. 11.



demonstrated to a nicety that the Athenian theater during its development in the early centuries underwent no violent changes, but evolved by gradual stages from a structure of primitive simplicity to the splendid edifice which adorned the precinct of Dionysus in the days of Lyeurgus and Menander. The starting point, the germ, as it were, of the whole, was the old orchestra-terrace which Dörpfeld discovered and brilliantly interpreted in the spring of 1886.<sup>53</sup>

Before proceeding, however, to the explication of this solution let us pause to observe that in the early Aeschylean period a scene-building apparently had not yet been erected. The plays were performed on the orchestra-terrace without the aid of an artificial background; an altar and a few simple accessories alone suggested the scene (see Fig. 16). The dressing booths for the actors at this period cannot have been either on or behind the terrace, but were presumably placed, as Reisch suggested,<sup>54</sup> at the outer ends of the parodi, or at any rate at a considerable distance from the orchestra. But in course of time an erection of some kind was demanded, to serve in part as a scenic background, partly as a screen to conceal the actors as they passed "behind the scenes" from parodus to parodus.<sup>55</sup> For, be it noted,

<sup>53</sup> See my article "The Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth-Century Theater."

<sup>54</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 194.

<sup>55</sup> Mantzius doubts this. See his *History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times*; translated by L. von Cossel (1903), p. 130, note 1. He writes: "We feel quite sure that Dörpfeld is mistaken in his opinion (*Das griechische Theater*, p. 370), that the dramas necessitated a decorative background. Here, as everywhere, the expert dramatist adapts himself to the given conditions of the stage in all important matters, and the scenic conditions do not change in order to conform themselves to each special drama." He concludes therefore that the *skene* was erected at the rear of the orchestra to serve at first as a dressing booth and to facilitate exits and entrances—a view that is shared by others also. But in my judgment this conclusion is debatable. Aeschylus and Sophocles were geniuses of the highest order and did not permit themselves to be hampered unduly by tradition, but were constantly trying new experiments and themselves creating new conditions, as witness the introduction of the second and the third actors. I believe therefore that the back-scene may have been originally added to serve as a background, not primarily as a dressing booth. See also Noack, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

the parodi were at first the only means of entrance and exit for actors as well as chorus. The precise date when this innovation was made is not known, although there appears to have been a structure of some description as early as 472 B.C., the year in which Aeschylus presented his *Persians*. The fleeting reference (vs. 141) to "this ancient house" certainly suggests the presence of something to represent a building — a view that has had many champions, but has none the less been frequently and vigorously contested (p. 44). But several of Aeschylus' plays certainly demanded a hut or other building as a part of the setting, the most notable instances being found in the Oresteian trilogy (exhibited in 458 B.C.), of which the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation-bearers* both require a palace and the *Eumenides* a temple. By the year 465 B.C. accordingly or thereabout a scene-building had been erected and was thenceforth available as a regular part of the scenic equipment. This is universally conceded.

What was the nature and appearance of this structure and where was it placed? That it was much smaller than the scene-building of the fourth century and was a temporary erection constructed of wood or other light and perishable materials is the all but unanimous belief.<sup>56</sup> But the question as to its location with reference to the orchestra-terrace is still a *lis sub iudice*. Two views clamor for recognition. The first of these was proposed by Dörpfeld and is, in the words of its most recent advocate, that the "scene-building was erected immediately behind the orchestra, where the declivity had previously been" (Fig. 19a).<sup>57</sup> Quite apart, however, from considerations of economy, this hypothesis involves one in a seemingly insuperable difficulty. For it implies

<sup>56</sup> Haigh, however, supposes that the fifth-century *skene* was a "permanent structure" and was "not put up and taken down at each festival" (*op. cit.*, p. 117). Petersen (*Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915), pp. 539 ff.) perversely restores it after the pattern of the Graeco-Roman scene-building.

<sup>57</sup> Flickinger (*op. cit.*, p. 228; so also p. 66, note 3) adds, "or in the south half of the old orchestra in case the orchestra was moved fifty feet nearer the Acropolis at this time." But that the position of the orchestra was not shifted when the first scene-building was erected can easily be demonstrated (p. 31).

— and the implication is complacently recognized by the adherents of this theory — that after the erection of the scene-building the orchestra still occupied the entire area of the orchestra-terrace. But, as we saw above (p. 22), the outer diameter of this terrace was about fourteen feet, five inches larger than that of the Lycurgean theater; and neither Dörpfeld nor any of his followers has ever been able to explain why the orchestra should have been reduced in size when the theater was reconstructed. The fourth-century theater was not smaller than its predecessor had been; on the contrary there are reasons for believing that it

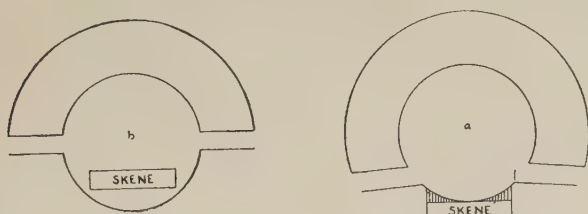


FIG. 19. — PLANS TO ILLUSTRATE DIFFERENT THEORIES REGARDING THE POSITION OF THE SCENE-BUILDING IN THE EARLY THEATER.

was actually larger (p. 10, and below, p. 35). This consideration is most disconcerting and casts a suspicion upon the validity of Dörpfeld's hypothesis. We shall soon discover additional reasons why this initial doubt must issue in disbelief.

The opposing view, originally suggested by von Wilamowitz, was adopted and elaborated by Robert, and is that the scene-building was erected *on* the terrace rather than beyond it (Fig. 19b).<sup>58</sup> But precisely where the building was placed and what its dimensions were no one has succeeded in determining. Fiechter,

<sup>58</sup> Von Wilamowitz, *Hermes*, XXI (1886), 605. Robert writes: "Auf die Frage nach der Stelle des älteren Skenengebäudes giebt der Ausgrabungsbefund keine Antwort. . . . Ich bin in meiner alten Meinung [*Hermes*, XXXI (1896), 550], dass es die hintere Hälfte der Orchestra einnahm, durch Dörpfelds eigene Darlegungen nur bestärkt worden" (*Hermes*, XXXII (1897), 423). Cf. Barnett, *The Greek Drama* (1901), p. 74: "Somewhere in the furthestmost half of the orchestra." Noack also (*op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7, 17, 40, 58, 59) places the early *skenē* on the orchestra-terrace.

who has published the most recent architectural treatise on the development of the Greek theater, significantly begins his discussion with the theater of the fourth century and makes no attempt to restore the earlier scene-building, weakly remarking: "There must have been an imposing (bedeutender) stage-building in the fifth century; but hardly in Aeschylus' time. We may

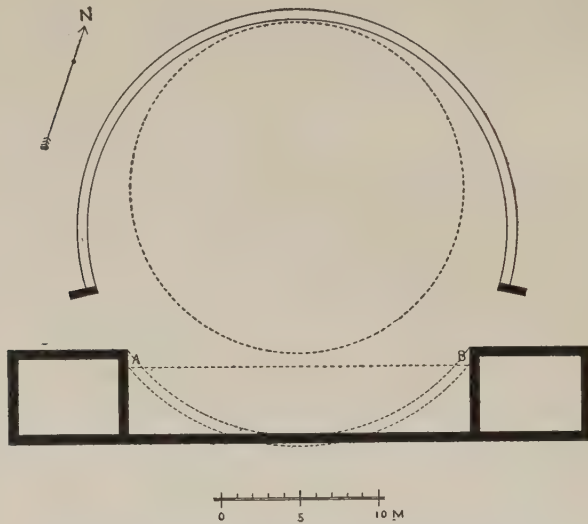


FIG. 20. — PLAN SHOWING THE RELATION OF THE FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER AT ATHENS TO THAT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

conjecture that such a structure was erected about the year 427 B.C. . . . But what it looked like no one knows.”<sup>59</sup>

The old orchestra-terrace, which may originally have been a threshing floor, as Gardner suggested (p. 22), was supported by a retaining wall whose thickness Dörpfeld indicated by two concentric circles.<sup>60</sup> Now if the front portion of the Lycurgean

<sup>59</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 11 (see note 52, above). In figure 14 however (fig. 8, p. 11) he presents a “problematischer Grundriss des ältesten Bühnengebäudes (Ergänzungsversuch).” He means by this the building which he supposes was erected about the year 427.

<sup>60</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, Tafeln 1 and 3.



scene-building together with the orchestra-circle, the diameter of which is determined by the inner boundary of the gutter (p. 9), be superimposed upon a circle of the exact size of the orchestra-terrace in such a manner that the corners of the *paraskenia* nearest the orchestra coincide exactly with the inner edge of the retaining wall, then the wall at the rear of the *paraskenia* and connecting them rests upon the retaining wall of the terrace at its southernmost point; and furthermore the circle of the fourth-century orchestra falls just within the inner periphery of the larger circle at its northernmost point, as is shown in figure 20. Again, if a line be drawn between the *paraskenia* and at the same distance back from their front line as the Hellenistic *proskenion* stood back of the Hellenistic *paraskenia*, which as we saw above was about four feet (p. 16), this line is an exact chord of the outermost circle of the old terrace-wall (Fig. 20, line *AB*). These striking facts are of the utmost significance. Such coincidences cannot have been accidental, and their discovery enables us for the first time to reconstruct this portion of the fifth-century theater.<sup>61</sup>

For it is clear, in the first place, that in the fifth century, — before the position of the theater was shifted, — there had been a structure of some kind *on* the orchestra-terrace, and that after this had been erected the north-south diameter of the area which remained available for the evolutions of the chorus was the same as the diameter of the fourth-century orchestra. In other words the Lycurgean orchestra was merely a counterpart of the orchestra which had been familiar to Sophocles and Euripides and probably also to Aeschylus during the closing years of his career. What this structure on the terrace was, the erection of which thus determined the size of the later orchestra, whether scene-building or *proskenion* or stage, must be made the subject of further inquiry. I may state, however, that in my belief it was the Aeschylean scene-building, and this I shall later attempt to prove (Chap. 8).

<sup>61</sup> This paragraph is quoted with very slight change from my "Key to the Reconstruction of the Fifth-Century Theater."

But before entering upon the discussion of this point let us see what further conclusions may be drawn from the discovery that the Lycurgean scene-building and the orchestra coincide so exactly with the old orchestra-terrace of the fifth century. In the first place we now understand why the fourth-century *paraskenia* had a depth of five meters and stood twenty and one-half meters apart. These dimensions were determined by the size of the orchestra-terrace, and were retained when the theater was reconstructed. When this reconstruction took place, whether at the close of the fifth century or several decades earlier, is of course not clear and may never be determinable, but that it did not occur at the time when the scene-building was first introduced is proved beyond cavil. And the fact that when reconstructed the *paraskenia* had the same depth and stood the same distance apart as in the earlier structure makes entirely reasonable the conjecture that the *paraskenia* of the Sophoclean theater had corresponded also in their other dimensions to those of the theater of Lycurgus. If this be granted, the width of the fifth-century *paraskenia* was about twenty-three feet (seven meters), and their height, and therefore the height of the first story of the scene-building, about thirteen feet (p. 11).

But further, the points where the parodi joined the orchestra-terrace are also established. Heretofore these have been as it were mere pawns, moved inconsequentially from place to place to suit the convenience of various theories. In fact, however, they were, I believe, a decisive factor in the development of the theater. When the first scene-building was erected in the days of Aeschylus its location was determined by the position of the parodi; it must have been placed either on a line with these or at the most only a few feet to the rear. No other position, in my opinion, was practicable (see further, p. 112). Incidentally, too, the location of the parodi proves that the theater when reconstructed was moved only thirty feet to the north, not fifty feet as is stated by Dörpfeld (p. 22).

Unfortunately, however, the angle which the parodi formed with the axis of the theater, that is, their *direction*, is not free from doubt. Some have held that this was a right angle (Fig. 19*b*); others, an obtuse angle with the vertex toward the auditorium (Fig. 19*a*). But with the parodi in the position which we may now believe them to have had, the second assumption at least appears to be untenable. The parodus to the west of the terrace would on this hypothesis have passed over the old retaining wall (Fig. 14, *D*) which, as we saw above, was probably con-

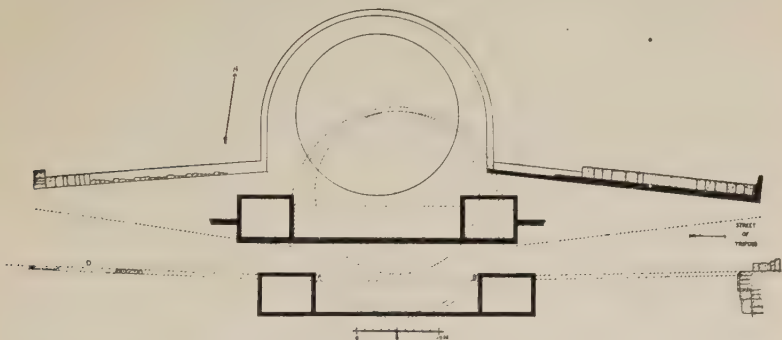


FIG. 21. — PLAN TO ILLUSTRATE THE CONJECTURAL DIRECTION OF THE PARODI AND THE FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM OF THE AESCHYLEAN THEATER.

structed during the early years of the fifth century. If, however, we draw a line through the two extant portions of this wall and extend it to the orchestra-terrace, this line joins the latter just behind the northeastern corner of the western *paraskenion*, at the very point indeed where the assumed chord *AB* (Fig. 14) cuts the arc of the circle (Fig. 21). This striking coincidence may of course be merely accidental, but when we observe that a corresponding line drawn from the terrace-wall to the eastern edge of the precinct leads almost exactly to the same place as does the fourth-century parodus, the coincidence appears to become significant. For the eastern parodus of the Lycurgean theater led apparently to the end of the famous Street of the Tripods.

It was along this road that Pausanias passed on his way from the Prytaneum to the precinct of Dionysus (I, 20, 1), and he left the precinct by the same road in order to inspect the Odeum of Pericles, which stood a short distance to the east of the theater. A considerable portion of this street can still be traced by the remains of many of the dedicatory monuments which in ancient times lined its course. And the fact that similar monuments were set up in the parodi of the theater suggests that these passage-ways were in a sense a continuation of this road. Where the "Portal of Dionysus" (Andocides, *De Mysteriis*, 38) was situated, has, I believe, never been determined. But there is little doubt that it was on the eastern side of the precinct and probably, judging from the slope of the land, near its northeastern corner.<sup>62</sup> It appears therefore to be a not unreasonable conjecture that the main portal of the precinct stood at the end of the Street of the Tripods, and further that the eastern parodus of the theater was so arranged as to lead directly to this entrance-way and the road beyond. If these hypotheses have any semblance of likelihood, we may conjecture that in the early days the lines of the parodi formed an obtuse angle whose vertex pointed *away* from the auditorium, and that later when the theater was moved nearer to the Acropolis this angle was reversed in order that the eastern parodus should still lead to the portal of the precinct. Should this be granted, it would follow that the front boundaries of the early auditorium extended in *northerly* directions from the orchestra-terrace, not in southerly directions as in the reconstructed building. These assumed relationships are indicated in figure 21. The fact that at first the seats of the auditorium were merely wooden bleachers (*ἱκρία*) would be an additional reason for making the extremities of the wings cling as closely as possible to the

<sup>62</sup> Dörpfeld, *Das griechische Theater*, p. 11: "Nach den Bodenverhältnissen muss dies Thor nicht weit von der N. O. Ecke des Hieron gelegen haben." Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*, p. 282: "Man darf den . . . Haupteingang nach dem Gelände wie nach den schriftstellerischen Nachrichten mit Sicherheit auf der Ostseite vermuten."



hillside. Danger to life and limb would thereby be lessened and at the same time economy of construction greatly increased. However this may be, let us note in conclusion that the parodi in the early period sloped gently upward to the orchestra-terrace<sup>63</sup> — a fact that appears to have a significant bearing upon the interpretation of certain passages in the fifth-century dramas (p. 38).

There appears, accordingly, to be good reason for believing that in the time of Aeschylus the auditorium was not so large as in the later centuries (see also p. 10). And let us remember throughout this discussion that we are dealing with the formative period of the Greek theater, and that this building at Athens was the model after which all other Greek theaters were more or less closely patterned. It itself attained to completed form only as the result of gradual changes and repeated readjustments.

This remark applies to still another feature of the Lyrurgian auditorium and in fact of most of those which were constructed in Hellenic times. This is the divergence between the curve of the lower rows of seats and that of the orchestra-circle. As the seats in the Aeschylean period were arranged about the circle of the orchestra-terrace, this divergence appears to have been due originally to accident rather than to design (Fig. 20). This arrangement possessed such obvious advantages that it was retained and doubtless improved when the theater was reconstructed.

The question as to the character of the structure which appears to have occupied the southern segment of the orchestra-terrace in the space between the *paraskenia* still remains for consideration. I have already stated that in my opinion this was the Aeschylean scene-building, and the reasons for this conclusion I shall set forth in my closing chapter. Let me state however

<sup>63</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, pp. 188, 189, 367; Noack, *op. cit.*, p. 5. But Noack's attempt (pp. 33 ff.) to prove that Aeschylus ordinarily made use of but a single parodus is most unconvincing.

that the theory that a *stage* occupied this space appears to me wholly untenable. The reasons why one cannot accept the assumption of a stage in the fifth-century theater are admirably summarized by Flickinger in his recent book on the Greek theater,<sup>64</sup> and need not here be repeated. As Flickinger remarks (p. 91): "The only tangible argument for a stage of any height in the fifth century is afforded by the occurrence of the words ἀναβαίνειν (to ascend) in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (vs. 732), *Knights* (vs. 149) and *Wasps* (vs. 1342), and καταβαίνειν (to descend) in his *Wasps* (vs. 1514) and *Women in Council* (vs. 1152)." For many years these five passages have been bandied about as in a game of battledore and shuttlecock, but the attempt to interpret them as proofs of a raised stage<sup>65</sup> or of a "difference in level between the orchestra and the floor of the proscenium colonnade"<sup>66</sup> received its *coup de mort* at the hands of White as long ago as 1891.<sup>67</sup> In at least three of the passages in question<sup>68</sup> the words "ascend" and "descend" appear to have the derived meaning "come on" and "go off" respectively, and they acquired these meanings, I believe, from the fact that in the early theater the parodi sloped upward to the orchestra-terrace.

<sup>64</sup> *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), pp. 59, 60, 78 ff. See also Capps, "The Greek Stage according to the Extant Dramas," *Trans. Am. Phil. Assoc.* XXII (1891), 5 ff.; White, "The Stage in Aristophanes," *Harv. Stud. Class. Phil.* II (1891), 159 ff.; Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896), pp. 188 ff. For the opposing view see Haigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff.

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. Haigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 167; Feusterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (1912), pp. 1 ff.

<sup>66</sup> This is Flickinger's view (*op. cit.*, p. 91). See also Rees, "The Function of the Πρόσθιον in the Production of Greek Plays," *Class. Phil.* X (1915), 128, and note 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff. (note 25). White's interpretation of *Wasps* (vss. 1341-43), however, is not conclusive. It may well be, as the scholiast remarks, that "the old man standing on something high coaxes the woman to come to him" (ἐπὶ τινος μετεώρου ὁ γέρον ἐφεστὼς προσκαλεῖται προσκοριζόμενος τὴν ἑταίραν).

<sup>68</sup> The interpretation of *Wasps* (vs. 1342) is in doubt (see note 28). In *Wasps*, (vs. 1514, ἀρὰ καταβαρέον γ' ἐπ' αὐτοῦ μοι καταβαίνειν means *in certamen descendere*. The objection raised by an anonymous writer in the *Litterarisches Centralblatt* for 1894 (p. 443) that καταβαίνειν when followed by ἐπὶ and the accusative cannot have this meaning, and by Müller (*Philologus*, *Suppl.* VII (1889-90), 10) that it may be so used of *things*, as a prize or goal, but not of

In the *Knights* (vss. 147 ff.) the two slaves, Demosthenes and Nicias, eager to find some means of ridding themselves of their cruel master Paphlagon, the leather-seller, have just read an oracle which states that "a sausage-seller ousts the leather-seller."

Nicias exclaims :

A sausage-seller ! <sup>69</sup> Goodness, what a trade !

Where-ever shall we find one ?

DEMOS.

That's the question.

NICIAS. Why here comes one (*προσέρχεται*), 'tis providential surely, Bound for the agora.

DEMOS. (*calling*) Hi, come hither, here !

You dearest man, you blessed sausage-seller !

Step up (*ἀνάβαινε*) a savior to the state and us.

S. S. Eh ! What are you shouting at ?

DEMOS.

Come here this instant

And hear your wonderful, amazing luck.

The scholia on the word *ἀνάβαινε* in this passage are of peculiar interest. One scholiast remarks : "He means that the sausage-seller should come up from the parodus on to the stage"; another adds : "Why from the parodus ? This explanation is not necessary. It should be observed that 'to come up' means 'to come in upon the stage' just as 'to go down' means 'to retire from the stage'. This use of the words arose from the ancient practice."<sup>70</sup> White writes :

Here then is a commentator who believed, as the moderns also generally have believed, that there was a stage in the time of Aristophanes, transmitting the tradition that the words *ἀναβαίνειν* and *καταβαίνειν* when thus used by the poet had lost all sense of elevation and descent. Before Aristophanes' time they had become technical "stage" terms. This came about, he says, "from the ancient practice." He is referring to the tradi-

persons (cited with approval by Fensterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (1912), p. 8) is merely captious criticism.

<sup>69</sup> Translation of B. B. Rogers (George Bell and Sons).

<sup>70</sup> *ἀνάβαινε*. ἴνα, φησίν, ἐκ τῆς παρόδου ἐπὶ τὸ λογεῖον ἀναβῇ. διὰ τί οὖν ἐκ τῆς παρόδου ; τοῦτο γὰρ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον. λεκτέον οὖν ὅτι ἀναβαίνειν ἐλέγετο τὸ ἐπὶ τὸ λογεῖον εἰσέναι. ὁ καὶ προσκεῖται. λέγεται γὰρ καταβαίνειν τὸ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἐντεῦθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἔθους. . . . ὡς ἐν θυμέλῃ δὲ τὸ ἀναβαίνειν. See also Suidas, s.v. *ἀνάβαινε*. For the form of the scholia in *Codex Ravennas* see Rutherford, *Scholia Aristophanica*, II, 18.

tion that when tragedy arose from the dithyrambic chorus and a "speaker" was first introduced the latter took his place upon the elevation afforded by the so-called *θυσιαστήριον* [sacrificial table] or *θυμέλη* [altar-step].

This explanation, however, in spite of its antiquity (note 70) and its acceptance by a number of modern scholars, appears to me to be less likely than the one suggested above. When the actor in the pre-Aeschylean period mounted the table or the altar-step (assuming this tradition to be correct), he was already in the presence of the audience; whereas if in the early years of the fifth century the dressing booths for the actors stood at the outer ends of the parodi and if the latter sloped up to the orchestra, nothing could be more natural than for the expressions "go up" and "go down" to acquire the meanings "go on" and "go off."

This explanation at any rate exactly suits the passages from Aristophanes. In the *Knights*, for example, when Nicias catches sight of the sausage-seller and exclaims: "Why here comes one" (*προσέρχεται*), the latter is still at a considerable distance down the parodus-slope. "Hi, come hither, here! (*δεῦρο δεῦρο*)", shouts Demosthenes. "You dearest man, come up here (*ἀνάβαγε*)." "Eh!" replies the fellow, stopping and staring vacantly toward the others, "What are you shouting at? (*τί ἐστι; τί με καλεῖτε;*)". "Come here," answers Demosthenes, "and hear your wonderful amazing luck."

Thereupon the sausage-seller advances into the orchestra-area and after setting down his dresser and his wares learns that he is to become the "mighty ruler of imperial Athens."

DEMOS. You see those people on the tiers? S. S. I do.

DEMOS. You shall be over-lord of all those people,

The Agora and the Harbors and the Pnyx.

You'll trim the generals, trample down the Council,

Fetter, imprison, make the Town-hall your brothel.

S. S. What, I? DEMOS. Yes, you yourself. And that's not all.

For mount you up upon the table here (*ἐπανάβηθι κατὰ τοῦτον τοῦδ'*)

And view the islands lying all around.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Verses 162 ff., translation of Rogers.



It is generally assumed that when the sausage-seller is first addressed he has already appeared upon the scene, that is, that he is already in the orchestra. But the assumption is unnecessary and, I confidently believe, is wrong. So in the *Acharnians* (vss. 731, 732), when the Megarian comes to the market which Dicaeopolis has set up in the orchestra, and says to his children, whom he intends to garb as pigs and offer for sale :

“Puir bairns o’ a puirer feyther,  
Come up (ἀμβάρε) to get yer bannock, an’ ye may,”<sup>72</sup>

the little girls are following at a distance and have not yet reached the orchestra. The suggestion<sup>73</sup> that the children mount a table to be exposed for sale is hardly plausible; they have not yet been disguised. Equally unconvincing is the alternative explanation offered by Reisch that their father takes them into his arms. In any case this scene, like that in the *Knights*, affords no evidence for the presence of a stage, nor yet for a *proskenion* with a floor “raised a step or two above the orchestra level.”<sup>74</sup> Dicaeopolis had arranged his market in the orchestra, not in the columned *proskenion*, and besides there is no evidence whatever that the *proskenia* had such a stylobate. The third passage (*Women in Council*, vs. 1152) likewise shows that there cannot have been a stage, as White (pp. 168 ff.) abundantly proved; (ἐν ὄσῳ καταβαίνεις) merely means “while you are departing.”

But whatever the origin of the use of (ἀναβαίνειν) and (καταβαίνειν) as technical “stage” terms, the slope of the parodi affords, I believe, an adequate interpretation of at least two passages in Euripides in which actors complain of the steepness of the ascent.<sup>75</sup> Thus in the *Electra* (vss. 489 ff.) the aged guardian, now a shepherd, enters laden with gifts for Electra and her guests.

<sup>72</sup> Translation of Tyrrell.

<sup>73</sup> Starkie, *ed.*, *Acharnians*, p. 154; Reisch, *Das griechische Theater*, p. 190. Reisch mentions the explanation adopted in the text but does not adhere to it.

<sup>74</sup> Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> So Reisch (*op. cit.*, pp. 188, 189), but with vacillation.

While still in the parodus, albeit near its upper end, he pauses for a moment's rest and speaking to himself as he gazes in the direction of the cottage, where lives Electra, says :

Where is my honored mistress, my loved child,  
Daughter of Agamemnon, once my charge?  
Steep to her house and difficult the ascent.

Again he moves forward, saying to himself the while :

With pain my age-enfeebled feet advance,  
Yet lab'ring onwards with bent knees I move  
To seek my friends.

Nearing the house he sees Electra before the door and presents his gifts :

O daughter, for mine eyes  
Before the house behold thee, I am come,  
Bringing this tender youngling from my fold, etc.<sup>76</sup>

A similar scene occurs in the *Ion* (vss. 725 ff.). Creusa and an aged servant are on their way to the Temple of Apollo, Creusa slightly in advance of the old man who is toiling up the slope. As she reaches the orchestra Creusa turns and says :

Thou reverend child-ward of my sometime sire  
Erechtheus, while he walked yet in the light,  
Bear up, and press to yon God's oracle,  
That thou mayst share my joy, if Loxias King  
A boding-pledge of sons hath uttered forth.  
'Tis sweet with friends to share prosperity :  
And if — which God forbid — if ill befall,  
'Tis sweet to gaze in eyes of sympathy.

Returning to the old man's side and graciously supporting his tottering steps she continues :

Now thine old loving tendance of my sire  
I, though thy lady, render back to thee.

As the two again move forward they engage in the following dialogue :

<sup>76</sup> Translation of R. Potter; the interpretation of the action is my own.

## OLD SERVANT

My daughter, spirit worthy of noble sires  
 Thou keepest, and thou hast not put to shame  
 Thine old forefathers, children of the soil.  
 Draw, draw me toward the shrines, and bring me on.  
 Steep is the god-ward path; be thou physician  
 Unto mine age, and help my toiling limbs.

## CREUSA

Follow; take heed where thou dost plant thy feet.

## OLD SERVANT

Lo there!  
 Slow is the foot, still by the mind outstripped.

## CREUSA

Try with thy staff the ground; lean hard thereon.

## OLD SERVANT

Blind guide is this when mine eyes serve so ill.

## CREUSA

Sooth said; yet yield not thou to weariness.

## OLD SERVANT

I would not, but my lost strength I command not.

They are now before the temple and Creusa, turning, says to the chorus:

Women, which do leal service at my loom  
 And shuttle, show what fortune hath my lord  
 Found touching issue, for which cause we came.<sup>77</sup>

Of course the steepness of the parodi was not so great as these scenes suggest; the poet exaggerates for the sake of dramatic effect. But the assumption that in these scenes the actors were silent until after they had attained the orchestra renders their

<sup>77</sup> Translation of A. S. Way (Loeb Classical Library, 1912); as before, however, the dramatic interpretation is my own.

interpretation more difficult. In any case they afford no justification for supposing that the scene-building stood on a higher level than the orchestra.<sup>78</sup> Before pursuing this matter further, however, let us inquire what evidence the dramatic literature of the fifth century affords for the reconstruction of this building. To this inquiry the passages which have just been quoted form a fitting introduction.

<sup>78</sup> Nor for the assumption of a "Chorbühne" (Weissmann, *Die scenische Aufführung der griechischen Dramen des V. Jahrhunderts*, 1893, p. 53).

Two other passages in which an ascent is mentioned are *The Madness of Heracles* of Euripides, vss. 119 ff. and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, vs. 286. Both are lyrical, and the steepness is perhaps wholly feigned.



#### IV

### THE EVIDENCE OF THE DRAMAS <sup>79</sup>

Our chief source of information regarding the types of background in use in the fifth century and the various settings employed are the texts of the plays themselves. These abound in hints of inestimable value, and yet owing to the almost complete lack of stage directions such evidence as may be gathered from a study of the texts must be used with caution. In some cases a reference is too fleeting to be of substantial service, or too vague to place a decision beyond the pale of uncertainty. Thus in the *Persians* of Aeschylus the mention of "this an-

#### <sup>79</sup> Selected Bibliography :

- Müller, *Lehrbuch der griechischen Bühnenalterthümer* (1886), pp. 107 ff., 136 ff. Although antiquated, this book is still a useful collection of material. As all subsequent treatises have been influenced by Dörpfeld's discoveries, the *Bühnenalterthümer* may be said to close the pre-Dörpfeldian period. An announcement of the discovery of the fifth-century theater is given in the *Nachträge*, pp. 415, 416.
- von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Die Bühne des Aischylos," *Hermes*, XXI (1886), 597 ff. See note 40.
- Harzmann, *Quaestiones Scaenicae* (1889). This dissertation is noteworthy as being the earliest attempt to classify the evidence of the dramas with reference to the stage question ; its conclusions are wrong.
- White, "The Stage in Aristophanes," *Harv. Stud. Class. Phil.*, II (1891), 159 ff. Excellent.
- Capps, "The Greek Stage According to the Extant Dramas," *Trans. Am. Phil. Assoc.* XXII (1891), 1 ff. A most useful treatise.
- Weissmann, *Die scenische Aufführung der Dramen des V. Jahrhunderts* (1893).
- Prickard, "The Relative Position of Actors and Chorus in the Theatre in the Fifth Century B.C.," *Am. Jour. Phil.* XIV (1893), 68 ff., 198 ff., 273 ff.
- Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896), pp. 176 ff.
- Robert, "Die Szenerie des *Aias*, der *Elrene* und des *Prometheus*," *Hermes*, XXXI (1896), 530 ff.
- Bolle, *Die Bühne des Sophokles* (1902) ; *Die Bühne des Aeschylus* (1906).
- Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* (see note 11).
- Fensterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (1912).
- Noack, *Σκηνή Τραγική* (see note 40).
- Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (see note 11).

For other titles see the following footnotes.

cient house" (τόδε στέγος ἀρχαῖον, vs. 141) is so indefinite and isolated that one may not be certain which building is intended, whether senate-house or palace, or even whether any building whatever was actually represented.<sup>80</sup> Later in the same play the ghost of Darius rises from the tomb, but what the appearance of the tomb was and where it was placed cannot be determined.<sup>81</sup> So in the *Peace* of Aristophanes, although it is clear that two buildings are represented, one the house of Trygaeus, the other the palace of Zeus, yet so vague are the hints afforded by the text that a minute consideration of the entire action of the play is necessary to show that the house of Zeus (τὴν οἰκίαν τὴν τοῦ Διός, vs. 178) stands *above* that of Trygaeus, and even this conclusion is contested.<sup>82</sup>

Or again a suspicious fullness of detail may characterize a description. An instance of this sort occurs in the *Ion* of Euripides. The background represents the temple of Apollo at Delphi (vs. 66), and the scene in which Ion singing the while honors the prophet-shrine with his matutinal service (καλὸν γε τὸν πόνον, ὦ | Φοῖβε, σοὶ πρὸ δόμων λατρεύω | τιμῶν μαντεῖον ἔδραν vs. 128-130) is one of the most beautiful creations of this gifted poet :

And I in the toil that is mine — mine now  
 And from childhood up, — with the bay's young bough,  
 And with wreathèd garlands holy, will cleanse  
 The portals of Phoebus; with dews from the spring

<sup>80</sup> The chorus propose to seat themselves in "this ancient house" and to deliberate upon the possible fortunes of the war, but they are prevented from doing so by the entrance of the queen, and the proposal comes to naught. Scholars have long been divided over the question of the setting, many denying that a house was represented (so, most recently, Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 226), others dissenting. Among the latter are von Wilamowitz (*Aischylos, Interpretationen*, 1914, p. 43); cf. *Hermes*, XXXII (1897), 283, and Petersen (*Die attische Tragödie*, 1915, p. 554).

<sup>81</sup> An *Altarbau*, Reisch, *Das griech. Theater* (1896), p. 196; a *Tempelchen* in form, von Wilamowitz, *Hermes* XXXII (1897), 393; a *χωμα γῆς* in the orchestra, Harrison, *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway* (1913), pp. 136 ff.

<sup>82</sup> The divergent views regarding the scenic arrangements of this unique play are presented and discussed by Sharpley in his edition of the *Peace* (1905), pp. 16 ff.

Will I sprinkle the pavement, and chase far thence  
 With the shaft from the string  
 The flocks of birds; the defilers shall flee  
 From his offerings holy. Nor mother is mine  
 Neither father; his temple hath nurtured me,  
 And I serve his shrine.<sup>83</sup>

But when the chorus with appropriate gesture (*ἰδοὺ τάνδ', ἄθρησον, Λερναῖον ὕδραν, κτλ.*, vss. 190, 191; *καὶ μὰν τόνδ' ἄθρησον, κτλ.*, vs. 201) describes in song a series of sculptured groups which adorned that famous shrine (vss. 184-218), whether metopes, as most have held, or in part the more conspicuous portions of one of the pediment-groups, as Homolle would have us believe,<sup>84</sup> are we to assume that the scene-building was actually so elaborately decorated? Probably not. Like the seashore in the *Philoctetes* and the darkness and mud in the *Frogs* and the brilliant stars in the *Rhesus* and the moonlight in the *Merchant of Venice*, these sculptural adornments in the *Ion* were no doubt left to the imagination. So the "marble walls" of verse 206<sup>85</sup> are purely imaginary; the scene-building of the fifth century was of wood.

Indeed, even the pediment itself, assuming the correctness of Homolle's interpretation, may have been imagined rather than actually represented. The only known reference to a pediment in Greek dramatic literature of the fifth century, aside from this dubious instance in the *Ion* and possibly one other in the *Orestes*, which will be discussed below (p. 64), is found in an isolated fragment of the *Hypsipyle* (Fragment 764, Nauck, Ed. 2) as restored by Valckenaer:<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Verses 102-111; translation of A. S. Way (Loeb Classical Library, 1912).

<sup>84</sup> "Monuments figurés de Delphes," *Bull. corres. hell.*, XXV (1901), 457-515; *ibid.*, XXVI (1902), 587-639. For the literature of the subject see these articles. Wecklein in his school edition of the *Ion* (1912) accepts in the main Homolle's conclusions. P. Gardner writing in 1899 (*Jour. Hell. Studies*, XIX (1899), 263) stated that he believed that the groups belonged to pediments, but were merely "fanciful and imaginary and that we cannot press the text of Euripides to prove that these subjects were really represented at Delphi."

<sup>85</sup> *τελχεσι λαῖνοισι*. But the word is in doubt. Murray reads *τελχεσσι*; Wecklein adopts the anonymous conjecture *τύποισι*; Hermann manufactured *τύκαισι*.

<sup>86</sup> *Diatribe in Euripidis Perditorum Dramatum Reliquias*, p. 214. The res-

ἰδοῦ, πρὸς αἰθέρ' ἐξαμίλλησαι κόρας  
 γραπτούς (τ' ἐν αἰετ)οῖσι πρόσβλεψον τύπους,

Look, direct your eyes toward the sky and gaze upon the painted statues in the gable.

But this, like the descriptions of the sculptures in the *Ion*, may also be an appeal to the imagination rather than to sight. Euripides displays a lively interest in the arts and never misses an opportunity to mention details of architecture, sculpture and painting.<sup>87</sup> Sophocles, on the other hand, rigidly excludes such matters from his dramas,<sup>88</sup> and yet the plays of both were exhibited in the same theater under similar, if not indeed precisely the same, conditions. This striking dissimilitude between these poets springs no doubt from a difference of temperament, and its recognition counsels caution.

The passages which have been cited suggest some of the difficulties that lie in the path of the interpreter, but with the exercise of due circumspection and by comparing play with play it is possible to glean from the texts a considerable body of reliable information regarding the outstanding features of the various backgrounds and settings that were in use in the fifth century. It is not our purpose to discuss these backgrounds and settings in minute detail, but rather to consider them in their larger aspects in order to determine, if possible, what light they may throw upon the character of the scene-building before which the plays were enacted. As it was customary to present a series of dramas in rapid succession (p. 76), the question of the changes of settings

tation is substantially correct, as the fragment is quoted by Galen (XVIII, 1, 519) in illustration of the use of *alerós* in the sense of "gable."

<sup>87</sup> For a convenient treatment of this subject see Huddilston, *The Attitude of the Greek Tragedians toward Art* (1898). See also Petersen, *Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915).

<sup>88</sup> The nearest approach is found in Fragment 1025 (Nauck, ed. 2), classed among the *dubia et spuria*:

θνητοὶ δὲ πολλοὶ καρδίᾳ πλανώμενοι  
 ἰδρυσάμεσθα πημάτων παραψυχὴν  
 θεῶν ἀγάλματ' ἐκ λίθων ἢ χαλκῶν  
 ἢ χρυσοτεύκτων ἢ ἐλεφαντίνων τύπους.

also is of vital importance. In this chapter, however, we shall consider only the irreducible minimum and shall regard the plays, and in some instances even parts of plays, as detached and isolated units.

Greek drama is ordinarily classed under three main types. First there are the more or less serious dramas known as tragedies. Of these, if we include the fragmentary *Hypsipyle* of Euripides and also such plays as the *Alcestis* and the *Helen*, which however are not tragedies in the strict sense of that word, thirty-three have been preserved. The second type comprises the satyr-plays, of which two specimens are extant: the *Cyclops* of Euripides and the mutilated *Ichneutae* or *Trackers* of Sophocles. Comedies form the third group, and of these eleven have survived the ravages of time, all from the pen of that master-genius Aristophanes. In addition to these forty-six more or less complete plays<sup>89</sup> many fragments of others have been preserved, and from some of these also may be gleaned an occasional hint regarding the backgrounds and the settings that were required for the presentation of the dramas to which they belonged.

Vitruvius at the end of the sixth chapter of the fifth book of his *De Architectura* remarks: <sup>90</sup>

There are three kinds of scenes [*scaenae*], one called the tragic, second, the comic, third, the satyric. Their decorations are different and unlike each other in scheme. Tragic scenes are delineated [*deformantur*] with columns, pediments, statues, and other objects suited to kings; comic scenes exhibit private dwellings, with balconies and views representing rows of windows, after the manner of ordinary dwellings; satyric

<sup>89</sup> Of the tragedies the *Rhesus*, which is of uncertain authorship, perhaps belongs to the fourth century. See Capps, "The Chorus in the Later Greek Drama," *Papers of Am. School Class. Studies at Athens*, VI, 400, where the literature is cited. See also Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 148. Of the comedies the *Ecclesiazusae* appears to have been performed in 392; the *Plutus* (revised) was presented in 388. According to the scholiast the first *Plutus* was exhibited in 408. These plays may, however, be grouped with those of the fifth century, from which they do not substantially differ.

<sup>90</sup> Vitruvius wrote in the time of Augustus; see Morgan, *Essays and Addresses* (1910, pp. 159 ff.). The translation is by Morgan, *Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture* (1914).



scenes are decorated with trees, caverns, mountains, and other rustic objects delineated in landscape style [*in topiodis speciem deformatis*].<sup>91</sup>

But this description of the several types of settings is only approximately correct. The list is not exhaustive and the classification cannot be rigidly applied. The author makes no mention, for example, of camp scenes, of which several are known, and says nothing of such simple and colorless settings as were used, for instance, in the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus and the *Andromeda* of Euripides. There was too, at least in the fifth century, a free interchange of type. The *Electra* of Euripides was played before a lowly cottage, not before a building of regal magnificence; while such dramas as the *Oedipus Coloneus*, the *Birds* and the *Philoctetes* had settings appropriate to satyric plays according to the classification given by Vitruvius. But Vitruvius was not writing about the conditions that obtained in the fifth century, concerning which he probably knew little or nothing, but about those rather that were in vogue hundreds of years later.<sup>92</sup> It is better therefore to dismiss his treatment of the subject and to make a classification of our own based upon a study of the extant texts themselves.

One of the first facts to emerge from such a study is that the dramas, if divided according to the character and use of the background, fall naturally into at least four groups. The first of these comprises those plays, both tragedies and comedies, for which the background represents a single building: a palace, a house, a temple, a hut, and the like, as occasion demands. Usually in such cases only one door, in addition to the parodi, is required for entrances and exits. In a few instances, however, two doors are so used, and occasionally even three. Examples are the *Agamemnon*, the *Eumenides*, the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the

<sup>91</sup> The word *topiodis* is in doubt; MSS., *topeodi*.

<sup>92</sup> The most recent discussion of the Vitruvian Greek theater is found in Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 ff. The author concludes that Vitruvius was describing the Graeco-Roman type of theater.

*Alcestis*, the two *Iphigenias*, the *Frogs*,<sup>93</sup> the *Wasps*, possibly also the *Lysistrata*.<sup>94</sup>

The second group is composed of plays for which the setting is a series of houses or other structures, two or three in number, ranged side by side, or, as in the case of the *Peace*, one above the other (p. 59). In the *Andromache* these represent the palace of Neoptolemus and a shrine of Thetis; in the *Hecuba*, an encampment; in the *Clouds*, the house of Strepsiades and the "Thinking-shop" of Socrates; in the *Acharnians*, the houses of Dicaeopolis, Euripides, and Lamachus; in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Agathon's house and the Thesmophorium;<sup>95</sup> in the *Ecclesiazusae* or *Women in Council*, the houses of Blepyrus and a neighbor, to which number some would add also the house of Chremes. Whether the *Lysistrata* belongs in this division is, as we have seen, not certain.

In the third group the scene is a stretch of wild country with rocks, trees, and the like, and the entrance at the rear represents the mouth of a cavern or hollow rock, as in the *Cyclops* and the *Birds*. One of the plays in this genre affords an instance of remarkably minute indication of the setting. This is the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. The orchestra represents the shore of Lemnos (vss. 1 ff.); the background, a desolate hillside in which is a "cave with twofold mouth," "such that," says the poet, "in cold weather either front offers a sunny seat, but in summer a breeze wafts sleep through the tunnelled grot."<sup>96</sup> This tunnel-like cavern is the abode of the stricken Philoctetes, and through

<sup>93</sup> The assumption of two houses is not necessary.

<sup>94</sup> The setting required by this play is in doubt. Some scholars (e.g. van Leeuwen, Fensterbusch) hold that the Propylaea alone was represented; others (e.g. Haigh), the Propylaea and the house of Lysistrata; still others (e.g. Reisch), the Propylaea and two houses; while some (e.g. Bethe, White) suggest a change of setting.

<sup>95</sup> To assume, with van Leeuwen and others, a change of setting by means of the *eccyclema* (p. 83) is quite unnecessary in spite of the scholiast (vs. 277). See Fensterbusch, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>96</sup> Verses 16 ff.; translation of Jebb.

it the hero, haggard and lame, makes his appearance (vss. 210 ff.), and probably also Heracles at the end of the play (vs. 1409).<sup>97</sup> Near the cave a spring is imagined to gush forth from the rock. "A little below," Odysseus remarks to Neoptolemus, "on the left hand perchance thou mayst see a spring, if indeed it hath not failed" (ἐῖπερ ἐστὶ σῶν, vss. 20, 21) — a clear indication that this feature of the scene was not included in the physical setting. Finally, the cavern is not on a level of the orchestra, but is high up (vss. 28, 29), and before it is a level space large enough to accommodate several persons (vss. 219 ff., 1000 ff., etc.), to which a path leads up from the shore below (vss. 16 ff., 539, 814, etc.).

The fourth and last division comprises those plays which make no use of the back-scene for entrances and exits, but either ignore its presence altogether or employ it to represent a hill, a cliff, or other eminence. The earliest extant example of this type is the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus, where the scene is a sacred precinct (ἄλσος, vs. 508) with a large altar shared by several deities (κοινοβωμία, vs. 222), back of which apparently there rises a hill (πάγος, vs. 189).<sup>98</sup> For the lost *Andromeda* of Euripides, of which only a few fragments survive, and for the still more fragmentary *Andromeda* of Sophocles, the background represented a cliff bordering on the sea, and to this the hapless Andromeda was bound in chains to be devoured by a hideous monster of the deep. Similarly the scene of the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus (as also of the lost *Prometheus Being Unbound*) is a rugged mountain-side at "the furthest confines of the earth in Scythia's pathless waste" (vs. 1, 2). Strictly speaking, however, it may

<sup>97</sup> See the excellent article by Woodhouse, "The Scenic Arrangements of the Philoctetes of Sophocles," *Jour. Hell. Stud.* XXXII (1912), 239-249.

<sup>98</sup> Some scholars identify the hill with the altar (βωμός) and suppose that Danaus mounts to the top of the altar. Von Wilamowitz (*Aischylos, Interpretationen*, 1914, pp. 6 ff.) conjectures that the altar is *on* the hill, which forms a sort of "Oberbühne." It should be noted that πάγον προσίχειν (vs. 189) strictly means "take refuge *at* the hill," not *on* it, and I believe accordingly that there was some kind of a structure behind the altar and rising above it.

be that these two plays do not belong in this group, as at the end of the *Prometheus Bound* Prometheus and the members of the chorus are hurled, precipice and all, into the depths of Tartarus. There is therefore in a certain sense a rear exit, but it is of a very exceptional form.<sup>99</sup> For the *Oedipus Coloneus* of Sophocles the setting is a sacred grove in whose depths Oedipus and Antigone conceal themselves on the approach of the chorus (vss. 113, 114). "Look!" sing the chorus,

Look! Who was it? Where abides he?  
In what nook or corner hides he —  
Of all men — of all mankind the most presuming?  
Search about! Spy him, there!  
Seek him out everywhere.

. . . . .

Some one has intruded on the sacred space;  
I the bound searching round  
Cannot yet light upon his hiding place.<sup>100</sup>

A setting similar to this is required for the latter half of the *Ajax* (vss. 814 ff.; cf. *vápos*, vs. 892).<sup>101</sup> In the mutilated *Ichneutae* of Sophocles a cave is indicated, but where it was placed and how it was represented are points that can not be certainly determined. It appears to have been underground, as both von Wilamowitz<sup>102</sup> and Robert<sup>103</sup> pointed out. Miss Harrison favors a mound (*χωμα γῆς*) placed at or near the center of the orchestra.<sup>104</sup> The setting

<sup>99</sup> See Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 227, 228.

<sup>100</sup> Verses 119 ff.; translation of Sir George Young. See Jebb, § 16.

<sup>101</sup> Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 244, supposes "that one of the side doors in the front of the scene-building was left open to represent the entrance to the glen, and that around and behind it were set panels painted to suggest the woodland coast and the glen. Into this opening Ajax collapsed as he fell upon his sword." Others (Jebb, Bolle, etc.) believe that trees and shrubbery were placed before the scene-building. Whatever the setting, there is not a genuine rear exit in this portion of the play.

<sup>102</sup> "Die Spürhunde des Sophokles," *Neuē Jahrb. f. d. klass. Alterthum*, XXIX (1912), 449 ff. He suggests an "ansteigendes Gelände."

<sup>103</sup> "Zu Sophokles' IXNETTAI," *Hermes*, XLVII (1912), 536. He supposes that the Charonian stairs were used.

<sup>104</sup> "Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, col. 9, vss. 1-7 and the *δρῶμενον* of Kyllene and the Satyrs," *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway* (1913), pp. 136 ff. See also Pearson, *Fragments of Sophocles I* (1917), ff. 224 ff.

employed in the *Persians* and the *Seven against Thebes* of Aeschylus are in doubt. If a building formed the background in these plays, as some scholars hold, they belong of course in the first group. In the lake-scene of the *Frogs* the house (or houses?) which the scene-building represents, though visible, is ignored.

The majority of the plays which have been preserved, and of the others about whose settings some knowledge may be gleaned from the fragments and from ancient commentators, make use of but a single entrance in the back-scene. A few employ two such entrances; a still smaller number, three; some, none at all. It follows that the statement which is repeated by many modern authorities, based on the testimony of Vitruvius and Pollux,<sup>105</sup> that in the Greek theater the background was regularly provided with three doors is far too sweeping, or at least misleading. The most that we can say, so far at any rate as the fifth century is concerned, is that the back-scene was so arranged that from one to three entrances could be provided as need required. When doors were employed they appear regularly to have opened outward.<sup>106</sup>

Was the door (or doors) in the back-scene approached by a flight of steps? We may confidently answer that it was not. At the most there may have been a single step or sill; there is no trustworthy evidence, either literary or archaeological, that may be cited in support of the assumption of a series of steps. The only passage in the extant dramas that seems to warrant such an assumption proves upon examination to be of illusory value. This passage is in the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* of Euripides, verses 96-103. Orestes and Pylades are seeking some means of entrance into the temple that they may steal the wooden image of the goddess, for which they have made their long and perilous voyage. After recounting the object of their mission, Orestes asks his companion what is to be done. According to the

<sup>105</sup> Vitruvius, V, 6; Pollux, IV, 124, 126.

<sup>106</sup> Mooney, *The House-door on the Ancient Stage* (1914), pp. 42 ff.



readings of the manuscripts the text of the passage is as follows :

Πυλάδῃ, σὺ γάρ μοι τοῦδε συλλήπτωρ πόνου,  
 τί δρῶμεν; ἀμφίβληστρα γὰρ τοίχων ὀρᾷς  
 ὑψηλά· πότρεα δωμάτων προσαμβάσεις  
 ἐκβησόμεσθα; πῶς ἂν οὖν μάθοιμεν ἂν,  
 ἢ χαλκότευκτα κληῖθρα λύσαντες μοχλοῖς,  
 100 ὧν οὐδὲν ἴσμεν; ἦν δ' ἀνοίγοντες πύλας  
 ληφθῶμεν εἰσβάσεις τε μηχανώμενοι,  
 θανούμεθ'. ἀλλὰ πρὶν θανεῖν, νεῶς ἐπι  
 φεύγωμεν, ἥπερ δεῦρ' ἐνανστολήσαμεν.

Murray translates :

Ho, Pylades,  
 Sole sharer of my quest, hast seen it all?  
 What can we next? Thou seest this circuit wall  
 Enormous? Must we climb the public stair,  
 With all men watching? Shall we seek somewhere  
 Some lock to pick, some secret bolt or bar —  
 Of all which we know nothing? Where we are,  
 If one man mark us, if they see us prize  
 The gate, or think of entrance anywhere,  
 'Tis death. — We still have time to fly for home:  
 Back to the galley quick, ere worse things come.

Similar is the translation of Way, who, however, adopts Paley's and Hermann's conjecture of *μή* for *ἦ* in verse 99 :

Up yonder temple-steps  
 Shall we ascend? How then could we learn more,  
 Except our levers force the brazen bolts  
 Whereof we know nought?

Both of these interpretations are misleading. The passage contains several difficulties — “omnia foedissime corrupta,” says Badham — of which the most glaring is the clause ὧν οὐδὲν ἴσμεν (vs. 100), “of which we know nothing.” These words make sheer nonsense and cannot be right.<sup>107</sup> The best correction perhaps is that proposed by Badham: ὧδ' οὐδὲν ἴσμεν; “[and] thus enter by way of the threshold?” If we adopt this or some

<sup>107</sup> In his critical edition of Euripides Murray translates: “An seras aliquas clam solvere conemur? Sed nescimus quales hic sint serae.”

similar reading,<sup>108</sup> ἦ (vs. 99) may be retained as a correlative of the preceding *πότερα*, as it certainly should be.<sup>109</sup> In verse 97 the word *δωμάτων* also is in doubt and has been corrected by most editors, following Kirchhoff, to *κλιμάκων*,<sup>110</sup> which occurs in connection with *προσαμβάσεις* in the *Seven against Thebes* vs. 466, the *Phoenician Women* vss. 489, 1173, and the *Bacchae* vs. 1213; and further in verse 98 *λάβοιμεν* should probably be substituted for *μάθοιμεν*, following Sallier and most editors.

With these corrections the passage reads :

πότερα κλιμάκων προσαμβάσεις  
ἐκβησόμεσθα ; πῶς ἂν οὖν λάβοιμεν ἂν ;  
ἦ χαλκότεκτα κληῖθρα λύσαντες μοχλοῖς  
ᾧδ' οὐδὲν ἔσιμεν ;

Shall we mount to our goal by a ladder's rungs, or shall we break the lock and enter by the door?

This is intelligible and seems to be right.<sup>111</sup> But whether these textual changes and this interpretation be accepted or not, this passage certainly may not be cited as proof that there was a flight of steps before the temple door. From the modern point of view this may seem strange, but modern conditions and modern stage practices should not be permitted to obtrude themselves.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Weil : ἂν' οὐδ' ἔσιμεν ; Köchly : ᾧδ' ἱερὸν ἔσιμεν ; Wecklein : ᾧδ' ἀδυτον ἔσιμεν.

<sup>109</sup> Paley's and Hermann's emendation *μή* (vs. 99) for *ἦ* does violence to the construction, besides making necessary the retention of the absurd *ᾧν οὐδὲν ἔσιμεν*. The same is true of Bates' conjecture : πῶς ἂν οὖν μάθοιμεν ἀλλ' | ἦ, κτλ.

<sup>110</sup> Weil remarks that if the reading *δωμάτων* be retained, "Oreste n'indiquerait qu'un seul moyen d'entrer dans le temple, et le conjonction ἦ . . . ne s'expliquerait pas."

<sup>111</sup> Schöne-Köchly-Bruhn (ed. 4, 1894), remark : "Orest stellt die Alternativ auf : wollen wir 'den Zugang zu dem Hause ganz zu Ende gehen . . . oder wieder nach Hause zurückkehren ?'" This is clearly wrong.

<sup>112</sup> Robert, *Hermes*, XXXII (1897), 437, assumed that there were steps before the temple in the *Ion*; but without warrant. We should remember further that the Greek private houses were entered directly from the street level, or at most had only one step or sill. The same was true even of early palaces; compare the remains of the palace at Palatitza.

Bruhn, *Lucubrationum Euripidearum capita selecta* (1886), pp. 276, 277, argued that because of the manuscript reading *πρὸς ἀμβάσεις* (so Ziegler), and because *ἐκβαλεῖν* cannot mean "ersteigen den Stufen," and because there was not room for steps on the narrow stage, therefore the steps led from the orchestra

Archaeological evidence for the existence of a step, or steps, and even of a platform before the central door has been found by certain writers in a number of vase-paintings from southern Italy, dating from the fourth and third centuries (Chap. 7). These paintings depict little buildings (*aediculae*), of which the best example is that of the famous Medea-vase from Canosa. The building pictured on this vase (Fig. 24, p. 96) has a stylobate of two steps and the whole is interpreted, together with the other *aediculae* (Figs. 27-29, pp. 102 ff.) as a reproduction more or less accurate of a portico before the central door of the scene-building. But, as we shall show later (Chap. 7), the attempt to connect these paintings with the early theater and to place the proposed interpretation upon them is wholly without warrant. Dörpfeld's well-known reconstruction of the scene-building (Fig. 23, p. 95) with such a projecting portico borrowed from these vase-paintings is most unsatisfactory.

That however a *prothyron* or portico formed an important feature of the setting for certain plays cannot be gainsaid.<sup>113</sup> In the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, vss. 1157 ff., the text shows beyond a peradventure not only that there was a vestibule, but that the space between the columns at the front and the door of the temple was of considerable extent. Thoas is about to enter the temple and is advancing between the columns of the vestibule when the door opens and Iphigenia comes out bearing in her arms the wooden image of the goddess. She exclaims (vs. 1159):

to the stage. This was opposed by Müller, *Philologus*, Supp. VI (1891), 49, who rightly insists that we must read *προσπαύδαreis*, and holds that *ἐκβαλεῖν*, though regularly intransitive in prose, may perhaps in poetry govern the accusative case; compare *Septem* vs. 466.

<sup>113</sup> See the excellent article by Rees, "The Function of the *Πρόθυρον* in the Production of Greek Plays," *Class. Phil.* X (1915), 117 ff. Curiously it was not until the last decade of the nineteenth century that the significance of the portico began to be generally recognized. The literature is cited by Rees and Legrand (*Daos* (1910), pp. 435 ff.; English translation by Loeb under the title *The New Greek Comedy* (1917), pp. 348 ff.). Haigh (*The Attic Theatre*, ed. 3, 1907) completely ignores it; Barnett (*The Greek Drama*, 1901, p. 74, note 1), wrongly supposes that "the *prothyra* or porches were in all probability represented by painting."

ἀναξ, ἔχ' αὐτοῦ πόδα σὸν ἐν παραστάσιν.

Sire, stay thy foot there in the portico.

To suppose, as some scholars do, that such a vestibule was represented merely by painting is absurd. In the lost *Cresphontes* of Euripides, Merope, if we may believe the account given by Hyginus,<sup>114</sup> rushes into the portico ("chalcidicum," cf. Vitruvius, V, 1, 4) armed with an ax that she may kill the stranger who is sleeping within, not knowing that he is her own son. She is prevented from committing the murder by the intervention of her aged attendant. Plutarch tells us<sup>115</sup> that as Merope lifted her ax to strike her son the audience was thrilled with fear and alarm lest she do violence to the lad before the old man could intervene. Evidently therefore the scene, though enacted in the vestibule, was in full view of the spectators. In the *Hypsipyle* of Euripides (Frag. 1, col. 2, 15 ff.) the chorus sings :

τί σὺ παρὰ προθύροις, φίλα ;  
 πότερα δώματος εἰσόδους  
 σαίρεις ἢ δρόσον ἐπὶ πέδῳ  
 βάλλεις οἷα τε δούλα, κτλ.

Why art thou, dear one, at the vestibule? Art thou sweeping the palace-entrance or sprinkling water-drops upon the ground in servile wise, etc.? <sup>116</sup>

This scene resembles that in the *Ion* of Euripides (vss. 82 ff.) where Ion sprinkles the pavement and adorns the portals of the temple with wreaths and branches of bay :

πτόρθοισι δάφνης  
 στέφουσιν θ' ἱεροῖς ἐσόδους Φοῖβου  
 καθαρὰς θήσομεν ὑγραῖς τε πέδον  
 ῥανίσιν νοτερόν, κτλ.

Apparently an altar stands just within the vestibule, and to this Creusa, when Ion approaches to murder her, flees for refuge.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>114</sup> *Fabulae* (ed. Schmidt, 1872, p. 137)

<sup>115</sup> *De Esu Carnium*, II, 998 E.

<sup>116</sup> Translation of Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, VI (1908), 85.

<sup>117</sup> The point is disputed ; but see Niejahr, *De Pollucis loco qui ad rem scenicam spectat* (1885), p. 10, and Weissmann, *Die scenische Aufführung der griechischen Dramen des 5. Jahrhunderts* (1893), p. 54.

See verses 1255 ff., 1306 and especially 1314 ff.:

ION ἔκλειπε βωμὸν καὶ θεηλάτους ἔδρας.

CRE. τὴν σὴν ὅπου σοι μητέρ' ἐστὶ νοθέτει.

ION σὺ δ' οὐχ ὑφέξεις ζήμιαν, κτείνουσ' ἐμέ;

GRE. ἦν γ' ἐντὸς ἀδύτων τῶνδ' ἐμε σφάξαι θέλῃς.

ION

"Hence! Leave the altar and the hallowed seat!"

CREUSA

"Thy mother lesson, wheresoe'er she be."

ION

"Shalt thou not suffer, who would murder me?"

CREUSA

"Yea — if within this shrine thou dare to slay me."<sup>118</sup>

So in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus (vss. 64 ff.; p. 75) it seems to me altogether probable that the *omphalos* with Orestes clinging to it is shown in the portico.<sup>119</sup> In the opening scene of the *Wasps* of Aristophanes the two slaves, Sosias and Xanthias, are seen sleeping before the door, probably in the *prothyron*, which appears to be mentioned at verse 875 (cf. also vs. 800):

ὦ δέσποτ' ἀναξ, γείτον ἀγνιεύ, τοῦμοῦ προθύρου προφυλάττων.

Agaveus, lord and neighbor, thou who keepest guard before my *prothyron*.<sup>120</sup>

A precisely similar scene occurs in the *Clouds*, vss. 1 ff.

These are a few of the passages in the extant dramas of the fifth century which imply the use of a portico as a part of the setting.<sup>121</sup> The manner in which this *prothyron* was indicated in the theater is a question which must be postponed until a later

<sup>118</sup> Translation of Way, slightly altered.

<sup>119</sup> Blass, *Eumeniden* (1907) and the majority of the earlier editors supposed that the *eccyclema* (p. 83) was used here. This is unnecessary. Von Wilamowitz, *Aeschyli Tragoediae* (1914) merely remarks: "valvae templi aperiuntur."

<sup>120</sup> So Blaydes. προθύρου προσθύλας P, προθύλου προσθύλας V, πρόσθεν προθύλας Scalinger, προθύρου προθύλας Bentley, etc.

<sup>121</sup> For other examples see Rees (note 113). Legrand (*Daos* (1910), pp. 434 ff.) argues against the existence of a vestibule. He remarks (p. 443): "En somme,



chapter, but the importance of the vestibule as a feature of the setting should not be overlooked.

Another feature that is given prominence in certain plays is a window. Thus in the *Wasps*, vss. 379, 380, a window is one of the means by which Philocleon attempts to affect his escape from the house:

ἀλλ' ἐξάψας διὰ τῆς θυρίδος τὸ καλῶδιον εἴτα καθίμα  
 δῆσας σαυτὸν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐμπλησάμενος Διοπέιθους.

So now to the window lash the cord, and twine it securely your limbs around.

With all Diopieithes fill your soul, then let yourself cleverly down to the ground.<sup>122</sup>

The preparations are soon completed, but just as the old man is about to slide down the rope he is discovered by his son, who calls to Sosias, the slave (vss. 398-99):

ἀνάβαιν' ἀνύσας κατὰ τὴν ἑτέραν καὶ ταῖσιν φυλλάσι παῖε,  
 ἦν πως πρῶμην ἀνακρούσῃται πληγῆς ταῖς εἰρεσιώναις.

With branch and with bough up aloft instant go, at yon window take post, dost discern, lad?

With whip and with scourge his course retrograde urge, and drive the ship back to her stern, lad.<sup>123</sup>

Philocleon, however, braves the beating and slides at once to the ground, where he is seized and hustled again into the house. The

la localisation de scènes comiques dans les *πρόθυρα* de quelque genre qu'ils soient demeure très contestable." See also the translation by Loeb, *The New Greek Comedy* (1917), p. 354. But Legrand slights the evidence afforded by the tragedies. We should remember, however, that both tragedies and comedies were performed in the same theater and before the same scene-building.

<sup>122</sup> Translation of Rogers.

<sup>123</sup> Translation of Cumberland. The words *κατὰ τὴν ἑτέραν* are obscure. Cumberland's translation, "at yon window," follows the old Latin version of Bergler (revised by Bruck): "Ascende in alteram fenestram." This is probably incorrect. Van Leeuwen understands the words to refer to the loose end of the rope: "Sosias per alteram funis extremitatem se attollit." Von Wilamowitz ("Ueber die Wespen des Aristophanes," *S.-B. d. Berl. Akad.*, 1911, p. 473) remarks: "auf der einem von beiden Seiten der Thür," i.e. on a curb-stone. He supposes that the window was directly over the door. The *εἰρεσιώνη* (vs. 399) hung over the door as a charm against pestilence and famine. It was an olive branch bound with wool and with various autumnal fruits. See Harrison, *Prolegomena*, pp. 79, 80.

window, it is clear, was at a considerable distance from the ground, but not necessarily in an upper story, as was formerly assumed. Some of the houses uncovered at Delos have windows as low as four or five feet above the level of the road.<sup>124</sup> Another comedy in which a window, or windows, may have been used is the *Ecclesiazusae* or *Women in Council*. Toward the end of the play (vss. 877 ff.) an old woman and a girl, both of them courtesans, carry on a scurrilous conversation. Each is peeping (παράκλυσσα, vs. 884; παράκλυθ' ὥσπερ γαλή, vs. 924; τί διακίπτεις, vs. 930) out of an opening on the watch for a lover. But whether both of these openings were windows,<sup>125</sup> or one was a window (cf. vs. 961: καταδραμοῦσα τὴν θύραν ἀνοιξον), the other a door, is not clear from the text. A window is nowhere specifically mentioned.

As regards the height of the scene-building in the fifth century the evidence afforded by the extant dramas is fairly clear. The majority of these require for their adequate presentation a structure only one story high; for a few, however, a second story or other similar superstructure is indispensable. There is no evidence for the use of a third story.<sup>126</sup> Certain late writers refer to this upper structure as the *episkenion*, but whether this term was already employed in the fifth century is not known<sup>127</sup> and is unimportant. Whatever its technical name may have been, it is referred to by the comic poet Plato, a younger contemporary of Aristophanes, in the line (Frag. 112, ed. Kock.): ὁρᾶτε τὸ διήρης ὑπερφῶν, "see (or "ye see") the upper story." In the *Peace*

<sup>124</sup> See Couve, "Fouilles a Délos," *Bull. de corres. hell.*, XIX (1895), 492, 498; Chamonard, "Fouilles de Délos," *ibid.*, XXX (1906), 496.

<sup>125</sup> So van Leeuwen, who further believes that the neighbor spies upon Blepyrus from a window (vss. 327 ff.); but this is not certain. Rogers believes that the woman was at a door; the girl, at a window.

<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Greek theaters, so far as is known, never exceeded two stories in height; see Fiechter, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Bethe's suggestion (*Prolegomena*, p. 234) that at Delos there were three stories has not found acceptance.

<sup>127</sup> Hesychius, ἐπισκήμιον τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καταγώγιον. Vitruvius, VII, 5, 5: *episcaenium*; V, 6, 6: *episcaenos*. In a Delian inscription of the year 274 B.C. occurs the expression αἱ ἐπάνω σκηναί; see Homolle, *Bull. de corres. hell.* XVIII (1894), 165.

(421 B.C.), as we have already observed, the palace of Zeus rises above the house of Trygaeus, and before its door is a space large enough to accommodate several persons (vss. 525 ff.: Hermes, Trygaeus, Opora (Harvest-home) and Theoria (Mayfair), while below in the orchestra is the cave from which the colossal statue of Peace is drawn forth and from which her attendants emerge. This solution of the difficulties involved in the setting of this unique play I believe to be correct; at any rate it is vastly superior to any other that has ever been proposed.<sup>128</sup> Assuming its substantial correctness, we are led to the conclusion that the palace of Zeus does not stand directly over the house of Trygaeus, but is set farther back. The roof of the first story thus provides a platform before the door of the story above. Although actually the roof of the house of Trygaeus it is imagined to be far above the clouds, even the summit of the heavenly Olympus.<sup>129</sup> The early portion of this play is a burlesque of the lost *Bellerophon* of Euripides, in which Bellerophon mounted on his winged steed Pegasus flies from earth to heaven, precisely as in the *Peace* Trygaeus rises on the back of an enormous beetle to the abode of the gods. It follows that the setting for the *Bellerophon* must have been very similar to that employed in the comedy of Aristophanes. Of like nature, too, are the scenic arrangements for the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, performed in the year 409 B.C. In this play the two stories of the scene-building represent a steep hillside. But a cave has replaced the door of Zeus' dwelling, the roof of the first story is supposed to be a ledge of rock, and the orchestra represents the shore of Lemnos. A practicable pathway leads up from the lower level to the higher.

These three plays, together with that of the comic poet Plato, to which the fragment quoted above belonged, were composed and presented after the year 427 B.C. But it is possible to show,

<sup>128</sup> I follow Sharpley, *The Peace of Aristophanes* (1905), pp. 16 ff. (See note 82 above.)

<sup>129</sup> Many scholars believe that the *θεολογείον* was employed; see note 133.

I believe, that as early as 440 the scene-building may already have been two stories in height. The play in question is the *Ajax* of Sophocles.<sup>130</sup> Odysseus stealthily approaches the tent of Ajax, and is crouching before its door (vs. 11: καί σ' οὐδὲν εἰσω τῆσδε παπταίνειν πύλης) scanning the ground for possible footprints (vs. 5) when he hears the voice of Athena. From this position close to the hut he does not see the goddess and exclaims (vss. 14, 15):

ὦ φθέγμ' Ἀθάνας, φιλτάτης ἔμοι θεῶν,  
ὡς εὐμαθές σου, κὰν ἀποπτος ᾗς ὄμωας,  
φώνημ' ἀκούω, κτλ.

Voice of Athena, dearest to me of the gods, how clearly, though thou be unseen, do I hear thy call, etc.

Presently (vss. 71 ff., 89, 90) Athena, bidding Odysseus remain where he is (vs. 86), summons the maddened Ajax to come forth; whereat with blood-stained scourge in hand the frenzied warrior bursts from his tent (vs. 301: ὑπᾶξας διὰ θυρῶν) and rushes forward into the orchestra. Turning he appears to see Athena, for he exclaims (vs. 91, 92):

ὦ χαῖρ' Ἀθάννα, χαίρε Διογενὲς τέκνον,  
ὡς εὖ παρέστης.

Hail Athena! Hail thou maiden sprung from Zeus, how well hast thou stood by me!

But Tecmessa, who apparently follows him to the door (see Jebb's note on verse 301), hearing his words but unable to see the goddess supposes that he is "ranting to some creature of his brain" (vss. 301, 302: σκιᾷ τινι λόγους ἀνέσπα).

Where is Athena standing during these scenes? Some commentators hold that the goddess appears in the orchestra before the tent of Ajax.<sup>131</sup> If, however, we accept this interpretation,

<sup>130</sup> The date is not absolutely certain, but the play is generally held to be one of the earliest of the extant dramas of Sophocles and is usually assigned to about the year 440. See Jebb's edition, § 41; Schneidewin-Nauck, *Aias*, pp. 63, 64; von Wilamowitz, *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Alterthum*, XXIX (1912), 450 ff.

<sup>131</sup> So most recently Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 291; see also Reisch, *Das griechische Theater*, p. 220. The case of the *Rhesus* (vss. 595 ff.) is different.

we are virtually compelled to suppose with Müller that the words *κἄν ἄποπτος ᾗς*, "even though thou be unseen," are to be understood only in a general sense ("als allgemeine Bemerkung zu fassen ist").<sup>132</sup> But as Jebb remarks (p. 213), "it is surely inconceivable that if Odysseus saw Athena standing near him, he should say to her 'How clearly I hear thy voice, *even when thou art unseen.*' Such a 'general remark' would be too weak." It is of course possible that the goddess, though close at hand, may be imagined to remain invisible, but a more reasonable supposition is that Athena is standing above on the roof,<sup>133</sup> and so cannot be seen by Odysseus who is cowering in fear close to the wall, but may be visible to Ajax from his position in the orchestra. If this be so, the question immediately arises how Athena makes her appearance. Surely she does not clamber up a ladder and emerge through an opening in the roof, as do Antigone and her aged attendant in the *Phoenician Women* of Euripides (vss. 88 ff., 100: *κέδρον παλαιὰν κλίμακ' ἐκπέρα ποδί*, also 103 ff.). This were unthinkable. There remain then two alternatives. The first is that the goddess is swung into position above the roof by means of the "machine" (*ἡ μηχανή*). But there is no known instance of the use of this device by Sophocles, and some scholars believe, in spite of the *Prometheus Bound*, that the machine did

<sup>132</sup> *Bühnenalterthümer*, p. 151, note 1. The old interpretation of *ἄποπτος* in this passage: "seen only at a distance," "dimly seen," is refuted by Jebb (note on vs. 15).

<sup>133</sup> Many commentators assume that she appears on the *θεολογεῖον*, which is supposed to be a sort of platform, either stationary or movable, above the roof. The word occurs only once, namely in Pollux, *Onomasticon*, IV, 130: *ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ θεολογείου, οὕτως ὑπὲρ τὴν σκηνὴν, ἐν ᾧ ἐπιφαίνονται θεοί, ὡς ὁ Ζεὺς καὶ οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν ἐν Ψυχοστασίᾳ* [of Aeschylus]. What Pollux meant by this is not certain. Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 61, 111 (cf. fig. 24), following Dörpfeld, thinks that it should be interpreted of the top of the *proskenion* in the Graeco-Roman theater. In any case the almost universally adopted explanation of this term as the name of a special platform or the like in the theater of the fifth century is wholly without warrant and should be abandoned. Pollux' citation of the *Psychostasia* of Aeschylus is not sufficient to justify this assumption. Pollux wrote his treatise in the latter half of the second century A.D. or six hundred years after the death of Aeschylus; see Flickinger's able discussion of the *Onomasticon*, pp. 97 ff. Barnett's discussion of the *θεολογεῖον* (*The Greek Drama*, pp. 74, 94) is a tangle of unintelligibilities.



not come into use until about the year 431.<sup>134</sup> The other, and far more probable, alternative is that Athena merely steps out through an opening in the *episkenion*, just as in the *Philoctetes* Heracles enters through the tunneled cave,<sup>135</sup> and as Zeus, Thetis and Eos in the lost *Psychostasia* or *The Weighing of the Souls* of Aeschylus must have done, if with Flickinger and others we deny Aeschylus the use of the machine. In what other manner Zeus could have made his appearance on the roof or on the *theologeion*, whatever that was (note 133), is not easy to imagine. As Aeschylus died in the year 456 and the *Psychostasia* certainly antedated the *Oresteia*, which was presented in 458, this may give us a *terminus ante quem* for the erection of a second story, or at least of some form of a superstructure.

In the preceding paragraphs mention has been made of the roof. This, as is generally conceded, was flat and was utilized by the dramatists in various ways and always with a striking enhancement of the scenic effect. It is here that the watchman in the *Agamemnon* (vss. 1 ff.) keeps lonely vigil, eager for the flashing of the beacon which will announce the fall of Troy; here, too, in the *Wasps* (vss. 1 ff.) Bdelycleon lies on guard and sleeps at his post. On awakening (vs. 136) he shouts his commands to the slaves below. It is from this vantage-point that the wife of Dicaeopolis views the procession (*Acharnians*, vs. 262); here Orestes, accompanied by Pylades and the hapless Hermione, takes his stand and threatens to crush his adversary with stones wrenched from the coping (*Orestes*, vss. 1567 ff.). At the close of the *Clouds* (vss. 1485 ff.) Strepsiades orders Xanthias to bring ladder and mattock and to hack to pieces the roof of the "Thinking-shop." He himself presently follows with lighted torch

<sup>134</sup> So most recently Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 292. Decharme (*Euripides and the Spirit of his Dramas*; English translation by Loeb, 1906, p. 263) assumes its use in the lost *Andromeda* of Sophocles, "since Perseus returned flying from the land of the Gorgons." But this cannot be proved; see Pearson, *Fragments of Sophocles*, I (1917), pp. 79, 80; Petersen, *Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915), pp. 606 ff.

<sup>135</sup> I agree with Woodhouse (see note 97, above) on this point.

and sets fire to the timbers. In the *Phoenician Women* (vss. 88 ff.) Antigone and her aged attendant mount to the roof to view the Argive host.<sup>136</sup> In the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles the roof represents a ledge of rock before the cave; in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, the top of the wall of the Acropolis: in the *Peace*, and probably in the *Bellerophon*, a region above the clouds where the gods have their abodes. From these examples we see how richly the accession of the scene-building with its flat roof enhanced the possibilities of dramatic action, and how freely the playwrights availed themselves of the opportunities thus afforded.<sup>137</sup>

In this connection, however, there arises a somewhat difficult question. Was the roof of the scene-building *entirely* flat, or was its central portion higher than the two ends? In other words, was there a pediment over the central door? The evidence of the dramas is meager and with the exception of one passage was cited in an earlier portion of this chapter (p. 45). The passage which remains for consideration occurs in the *Orestes* of Euripides (vss. 1369 ff.). Helen has been murderously attacked within the palace and her shrieks have scarcely died away when suddenly one of her attendants, a Phrygian eunuch (vs. 1528), makes his escape through an opening near the roof and leaps to the ground. He is panic-stricken, and well he may be. For he has been witness of the attempted murder, he has seen Hermione seized and his own companions struck down or scattered in headlong flight. All

<sup>136</sup> Euripides here employs the expression *μελάρων διήρης ἔσχατον*, which some explain as meaning the roof of the *second* story. But this is not necessary; see Pearson's note *ad loc.*, where, be it observed, "first floor" means "second floor" in American parlance. Pollux in his definition of the word *διστεγία* cites this passage. He says (IV, 129): *ἡ δὲ διστεγία, ποτὲ μὲν ἐν οἴκῳ βασιλείῳ, διήρης δωμάτων, οἶον ἀπ' οὗ ἐν Φοινίσσαις ἡ Ἀντιγόνη βλέπει τὸν στρατὸν . . . ἐν δὲ κωμῶδι ἀπὸ τῆς διστεγίας πορνοβόσκοι τινες κατοπτέουσι, κτλ.* The word is formed from the adjective *διστεγος*, "of two stories," and means the second story. When applied to the scene-building it may include, I believe, the roof of the first story. Many of the proffered elucidations of this term are too fantastic to be of value.

<sup>137</sup> For an illuminating discussion of the troublesome word *logeion* see Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 59, 291, 292, also 86, 97, 98, etc.

of this he recounts with tense excitement in a long lyrical passage which is interrupted only by an occasional brief remark or query of the chorus. It begins (vs. 1369):

Ἄργεϊον ξίφος ἐκ θανάτου πέφενγα  
 βαρβάροις εὐμάρισιν,  
 κεδρωτὰ παστάδων ὑπὲρ τέραμνα  
 Δωρικός τε τριγλύφους,  
 φρουῖδα, φρουῖδα, γᾶ, γᾶ,  
 βαρβάροισι δρασμοῖς.

From the death by the Argive swords have I fled!  
 In my shoon barbaric I sped;  
 O'er the colonnade's rafters of cedar I clomb;  
 'Twixt the Dorian triglyphs I slid; and I come  
 Fleeing like panic-struck Asian array —  
 O Earth, O Earth — away and away.<sup>138</sup>

Pausing merely to note the sensational character of this unusual entrance, which may be compared with that in the *Eumenides* (vss. 33 ff.), where the priestess, stricken with terror, crawls on all fours from the temple (τρέχω δὲ χερσίν), let us inquire precisely how the Phrygian accomplished his escape. The words in the text (παστάδων . . . τριγλύφους) strictly interpreted mean "over the beams of the vestibule and over the Dorian triglyphs" and seem to imply a gable roof. Through an opening in the pediment the Phrygian slips or leaps over the frieze to the ground. This is the interpretation favored by Reisch albeit with misgivings.<sup>139</sup> Others however, are content with the less accurate rendering: "over the beams and *between* the triglyphs."<sup>140</sup> A third group of commentators believe that the Phrygian is describing his escape from Helen's apartments into the *inner* court and that he makes his entrance before the audience in the usual manner through the door of the palace. Support for this view is found in three lines which in the manuscripts immediately precede the

<sup>138</sup> Translation of Way.

<sup>139</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 205: "von einem solchen ist wohl im 'Orestes' der Sklave herabgesprungen." See also p. 204, and note 145 below.

<sup>140</sup> So Decharme, *Euripides and the Spirit of his Dramas*; translated by Loeb, p. 252: "He has slipped out between the Doric triglyphs, or in modern terms, has jumped out of the window."

Phrygian's appearance (vss. 1366-68).<sup>141</sup> The leader of the chorus remarks :

ἀλλὰ κτυπεῖ γὰρ κληῖθρα βασιλικῶν δόμων,  
σιγήσατ'· ἔξω γάρ τις ἐκβαίνει Φρυγῶν,  
οὐ πενσόμεσθα τὰν δόμοις ὅπως ἔχει.

But lo, the bars clash of the royal halls!  
Hush ye: — there comes forth of her Phrygians one  
Of whom we shall learn what befell within.<sup>142</sup>

The majority of editors, however, justly hold these verses to be spurious, as did one of the ancient commentators, who declared them to be an interpolation inserted by the actors. These, he says, preferred to make their entrance through the door lest in leaping from above they should suffer injury.<sup>143</sup>

But whichever interpretation be adopted, it is clear, I think, that the evidence of these three dramas, the *Hypsipyle*, the *Ion*, and the *Orestes*, is too meager and uncertain to warrant a conclusive judgment. There appears, however, to be no good reason for denying at least the occasional erection of a small gable roof to meet the playwright's needs. Dörpfeld, relying in part upon these passages, in part upon the supposed evidence of the late vase-paintings mentioned above (p. 55), reconstructed the scene-building of the fifth century with a gable over the central portion (Fig. 23, p. 95, below). He finds additional support for this reconstruction in the presence of certain holes (Dübel-löcher) above the cornice of the *proskenion* at Priene, which he

<sup>141</sup> Compare also a scholium found in the *Codex Guelferbytanus*: ἄλλου μὲν οἰκήματος ὑπερπηδῆσας τὰ στέγη, ἐν ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐλθὼν καὶ ἡσφαλισμένας εὐρὼν τὰς τούτων πύλας, τὰ τούτων κλεῖθρα συντρίψας ἐξῆλθεν.

<sup>142</sup> Translation of Way.

<sup>143</sup> τούτους τοὺς τρεῖς στίχους οὐκ ἂν τις ἐξ ἑτοίμου συγχωρήσειεν Εὐριπίδου εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μάλλον τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, οἵτινες, ἵνα μὴ κακοπαθῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν βασιλείων δόμων καταλλόμενοι, παρὰ νολίζαντες ἐκπορεύονται, κτλ.

The apparent stupidity of the reason assigned for the interpolation may perhaps be explained away by supposing that in the late Hellenistic or Graeco-Roman theater the distance from pediment to ground was greater than in the time of Euripides. Furthermore in late times the scene-building was of stone and perhaps afforded no convenient opening through a pediment for the escape of the slave.

supposes may have served to hold such a pediment in place.<sup>144</sup> But this explanation is by many held to be unsound, while his restoration of the scene-building at Athens has met with but little favor.

As regards the architectural and other adornment of the scene-building, Aeschylus and Sophocles are silent, while Aristophanes is provokingly chary of information. It is to Euripides alone that we must turn for enlightenment, but his descriptions, as of the sculptures in the *Ion* (p. 44), are sometimes so lavish as to arouse suspicion. His frequent references however, to columns (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*, vs. 128, *Ion*, vs. 185, *Bacchae*, vs. 591, *The Mad Heracles*, vs. 1038); the triglyph-frieze (*Orestes*, vs. 1372, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, vs. 113,<sup>145</sup> *Bacchae*, vs. 1214); and the cornice (*Iphigenia among the Taurians*, vs. 129, *Ion*, vss. 156, 172, *Orestes*, vss. 1569, 1570, 1620) possess a verisimilitude that challenges belief. And that color also was used in the adornment of the scene-building in conformity with the prevailing taste is not to be doubted. A hint of this is found in the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, vs. 128, where the chorus speak of "the gilded cornice of thy pillared temple," and in the *Ion*, vss. 156, 157, where the shrine is spoken of as golden. One is reminded that as early as about the year 460, while Aeschylus was still producing plays, the artist Agatharchus had been employed to paint the *skene* (note 178, p. 82); while inscriptions of the third century

<sup>144</sup> *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst.* XVI (1901), 32; *ibid.*, *Anzeiger*, XXVIII (1913), 40. This interpretation is scornfully rejected by Fiechter (*op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33, Ann. 3).

<sup>145</sup> *δρα δέ γ' εἰσω τριγλύφων ὅποι κενὸν | δέμας καθεῖναι*, "Ah, see; far up, between each pair of beams | A hollow one might creep through" (Murray's translation). This is the traditional interpretation, but both text and interpretation are in doubt. *τριγλύφων* I think, means here the triglyph-frieze, as it does also in *Bacchae*, vs. 1214.

My colleague, Professor O. M. Washburn, believes that *εἰσω* here means "within" in the sense of "beyond" or "behind," i.e., behind the frieze is an opening in the ceiling of the vestibule, by means of which one may make his way to the attic and so let himself down into the cella. See his paper "Iphigenia Taurica 113 as a Document in the History of Architecture," *Amer. Jour. Arch.* XXII (1918), 434 ff.; also "The Origin of the Triglyph Frieze," *ibid.*, XXIII (1919), 33 ff.



pertaining to the theater at Delos more than once mention the use of painting (note 26, p. 15).

At this point we may conclude this portion of our survey of the dramas. No attempt has been made to cite every passage bearing upon the character of the scene-building and of the settings that were in use; and in the nature of the case what evidence there is, is fragmentary and much of it negative, or at least inconclusive. That which seems to possess a positive significance needs to be supplemented by a study of the changes of scene or locality in Greek dramas, particularly of those which may contribute to our understanding of the scene-building. To this subject we may now address ourselves.

CHANGES OF THE SETTING <sup>146</sup>

That the Greek playwright did not regard unity of time and unity of place as coercive principles of dramatic technique has long been recognized. He observed them rather merely as natural and prevailing, albeit violable, traditions of his art. They were not submitted to as a strait-jacket of convention arbitrarily prescribed by an inscrutable authority; but they were accepted as an appropriate and dignified vesture to be worn with an easy grace or laid aside at will. And had Castelvetro and Sidney and Boileau been more observant of the facts, it is scarcely conceivable that the bastard "unities" would ever have been fathered upon Aristotle or erected into a dogma of dramatic art.<sup>147</sup>

For the facts are that in Greek drama there occur with conspicuous frequency not only changes of scene or locality, but intervals of time as well. From the point of view of technique both are pertinent. Neglect of either would be a serious oversight. But in a study of scenic arrangement disunity of time is

<sup>146</sup> Selected bibliography:

- Müller, *Griechische Bühnenalterthümer* (1886). See note 79.  
 von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Die Bühne des Aischylos," *Hermes*, XXI (1886), 597 ff.  
 Dörpfeld und Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896).  
 Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* (see note 11).  
 Felsch, *Quibus Artificiis Adhibitis Poetae Tragici Graeci Unitates Illas et Temporis et Loci Observaverint* (1906).  
 Schübl, *Die Landschaft auf der Bühne des 5. vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts* (1912).  
 Fensterbusch, *Die Bühne des Aristophanes* (1912).  
 Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918).

For other references see the following footnotes.

<sup>147</sup> For an admirable discussion of this subject see Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, chap. 7.

of slight importance and may safely be omitted.<sup>148</sup> Not so, however, changes of place. These are of vital moment and demand a detailed examination.

Changes of scene or locality occur both *within* plays and *between* them, and in both situations are equally instructive. Those which fall within the plays<sup>149</sup> rarely involve a modification of the setting. The greater number are facilitated by the use of a multiple set, or else depend merely upon the suggestiveness of word and action and the visualizing power of the imagination, which schools both the poet's pen and the apprehending mind to give

to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

An excellent example of the last genre is found in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes.

At the opening of the play the orchestra represents the road and an open space before the house of Heracles. Suddenly Charon, grim ferryman of the dead, appears rowing his tiny boat, and in a twinkling the orchestra becomes a lake. The presence of the boat and Dionysus' exclamation "Why, that's the lake, by Zeus!" (*λίμνη γὰρ Δία αὖτη 'στίν* (vs. 181)) are alone sufficient to whisk the imagination of the audience to the Acherusian shores. With the disappearance of Charon and his boat the lake is forgotten, and the orchestra becomes in turn the regions of the dead, dark and loathsome. Horrid specters hover in the air, while in the deep mire flounder

such as have wronged a guest,  
Or picked a wench's pocket while they kissed her,  
Beaten their mother, smacked their fathers' jaws,  
Or sworn perjurious oaths before high heaven.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>148</sup> On this subject see Croiset, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, III (1899), 131, 132; Kent, "The Time Element in the Greek Drama," *Trans. Am. Phil. Assoc.* XXXVII (1906), 39 ff.; Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 246 ff.

<sup>149</sup> For changes of scene between plays see p. 76.

<sup>150</sup> Vss. 146 ff.; translation of Murray.

Again the poet waves his wand, and darkness and mud give place to light most beautiful, and verdant meadows and groves of glossy myrtle, where the blessed "initiates" dance and sing in joyous revelry. Another shift, and Dionysus and his slave stand at the portals of Pluto's dwelling.

A similar, but less extensive, series is found in the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes. The building which has represented the city residence of Dicaeopolis suddenly is imagined to be his country house, and the orchestra, which has represented the Pnyx, becomes Dicaeopolis' farm. Words and actions alone indicate the imagined change (*cf.* v. 202: ἄξω τὰ κατ' ἀγροὺς εἰσιὼν Διονύσια).<sup>151</sup> Later, though with less abruptness, Athens again becomes the scene of action, and Pnyx and farm give way to market place. Other examples of this type of change are easily found, especially in comedy. Their significance lies in the vividness with which they illumine for us the primitive simplicity of the early scenic arrangements.

Instructive, too, in this regard is the use of the multiple set. Thus in the play last mentioned, the background represents the houses of Dicaeopolis, Euripides and Lamachus, while before them in the orchestra are placed benches and other properties to indicate the Pnyx.<sup>152</sup> At the opening of the comedy Dicaeopolis, weary of the war with Sparta, appears alone in the place of assembly. It is early morning (ἔωθινῆς, vs. 20) and he awaits with unconcealed impatience the coming of the Prytanes and the rabble. Finally after the lapse of several hours (μεσημβρινοί, vs. 40) these rush in pell-mell, the benches and the surrounding space are filled, and the assembly is called to order. The war party holds the whip hand and will brook no interference with

<sup>151</sup> See Starkie's excellent comments, ed. *Acharnians*, pp. 245 ff. Quite gratuitous is van Leeuwen's suggestion (*Acharnenses*, 1901, p. 3) that Dicaeopolis celebrates the rural Dionysia in the town (in ipsa urbe celebrare parva Liberalia . . . figentem se rure versari).

<sup>152</sup> Fensterbusch, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff., believes that there was a stage (*cf.* pp. 1 ff.). He concedes, however, that the Pnyx was in the orchestra.

its plans, until at length Dicaeopolis, exasperated and disgusted, has a happy inspiration. "A drop of rain has struck me!" he exclaims, and the meeting is immediately and unceremoniously adjourned (vs. 173). At verse 202, announcing that he "will go within (εἰσὼν)<sup>153</sup> and celebrate the rural feast of Dionysus," Dicaeopolis enters his house, which, as we saw above, is now imagined to be his country residence. Throughout the remainder of the play the benches and the bema of the Pnyx, though still included in the physical setting, are treated by both poet and audience as if they were non-existent. In similar manner, during the scene in the Pnyx, the house from which Dicaeopolis made his appearance is for the time being ignored, and the action is thought of as occurring not only not before the building, but not even in its immediate neighborhood. At the conclusion of the scene Dicaeopolis' remark, "I shall go within," and his accompanying action restore the house once more to a prominent place in the setting.<sup>154</sup>

In the *Libation-bearers* of Aeschylus occurs another example of this type. The background represents the castle of Clytaemnestra and Aegisthus; in incongruous proximity stands the tomb of the murdered Agamemnon. During the long scene at the tomb the presence of the castle is all but forgotten. But it is not quite forgotten, as the words of Orestes, *τήνδε μὲν στείχειν ἔσω* (vs. 552), "She (*i.e.* Electra) must go within," clearly show.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> I do not agree with Droysen (*Quaestiones de Aristophanis re scaenica*, 1868, p. 10), Starkie (notes *ad loc.* and also on *Wasps*, vs. 107), and others that *εἰσὼν* means "domum (*i.e.* rus) ibo." See van Leeuwen's note on *Vespae*, vs. 107.

<sup>154</sup> So in the *Frogs*, during the central scenes the building which represents the house of Heracles is, as it were, forgotten. In the later portions of the play the same house, as I believe, does duty as the palace of Pluto. It is unnecessary to assume, with some scholars, the existence of two houses side by side—still less the use of screens or hangings to conceal the building during the intervening scenes.

<sup>155</sup> Verrall (ed. *Choephoroi*, 1893) mistranslates: "My sister here must go home," but he favors at least "two changes of the decoration" (Intro. p. xxxi). Tucker also (*Choephoroi*, 1901, p. xli) and Blass (*Choephoren*, 1906, p. 20) believe that during the scene at the tomb the palace was in some manner concealed from view. But the word *ἔσω* with such verbs as *στείχειν*, *κομίζεσθαι*,



This remark, like Dicaeopolis' announcement in the *Acharnians* (vs. 202), indicates that the house, though far distant in imagination, is actually visible and near at hand. By so ingenuous a hint is the way prepared for the ensuing change of scene. And that, even after the action has shifted to the castle (vss. 649 ff.), the tomb still remains visible in the orchestra is shown beyond a peradventure by the invocation of the chorus, "O Sovereign Earth, and thou august mound that liest now upon the body of our king and admiral, now hearken; now send aid!"<sup>156</sup> To remove so heavy a piece of stage-furniture before or during the choral ode (vss. 583 ff.) would occasion an awkward interruption, and thus seriously mar the artistic effect of the drama. The poet chooses therefore to leave the setting undisturbed until the end.

If the principle suggested at the close of the preceding paragraph be sound, it should of course be applicable in all cases. But on this point we must plead ignorance. The most that can be said is that the only universally acknowledged instances of a change of the setting occur during the temporary absence of both chorus and actors. At first blush this striking synchronism of deserted "stage" with alteration of the set appears to be decisive.<sup>157</sup> The inference is tempting that under other conditions no interruption of the action, whether occasioned by the changing of structural background or the moving of heavy properties or the alleged shifting of painted hangings and screens, was countenanced. But

etc., like the English "go within," surely indicates the presence of the house. Compare *Cho.*, vs. 949, *Agam.*, vs. 1035, *Oed. Tyr.*, vs. 92, *Ant.*, vs. 578, *Plut.*, vs. 231, *Eccl.*, vss. 510, 511, etc. Von Wilamowitz (*Aeschyli Tragoediae*, 1914, p. 247) says: "regia usque ad v. 554 ignoratur, ignoranda etiam spectatoribus." See also Felsch, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>156</sup> Vss. 723 ff.: ὦ πότνια χθὼν καὶ πότνι' ἀκτὴ | χώματος, ἡ νῦν, κτλ. It should be noted that the chorus is in the orchestra and presumably near the tomb. Tucker (see the preceding note) overlooks the significance of this passage. He writes (p. xli): "I should prefer to suppose that the tomb was actually removed," etc. Blass (*op. cit.*, p. 20) dissents. See also Niejahr, *Progr. des Gymn. zu Greifswald* (1885), pp. xiii, xiv.

<sup>157</sup> Compare Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 162: "Es ist selbstverständlich, dass nicht nur die Schauspieler die Bühne, sondern auch der Chor die Orchestra beim Eintreten einer Szenenverwandlung verlassen haben musste." See also p. 161.

unfortunately this cannot be established. An attempted proof would issue only in a *petitio principii*.

Of the changes of locality which involve a modification of the setting the most conspicuous instance occurring within the plays is found in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. This happens to be also the earliest example known. The background represents at first the temple of Apollo at Delphi. In an impressive scene Apollo bids Orestes quit his shrine and go to Athens and there before a court instituted by Athena seek exculpation from the charge of murder. Shortly after his departure the Furies, who constitute the chorus of the play, set out in hot pursuit. Apollo retires into the temple, and the "stage" is deserted. This occurs at verse 234. The next verse reads: "Queen Athena, at the behests of Loxias am I come," and is spoken by Orestes as he sinks, weary and travel-stained, at the feet of the statue of the goddess, while the Furies reënter tracking like hounds upon the scent the blood-dyed footprints of their intended victim. Thenceforth Athens is the scene of the action. It is evident then that during the absence of chorus and actors the setting has been modified. But how simple the change! A statue of Athena has been substituted for the symbols of Apollo, and possibly benches and other properties introduced for use in the court scene which is to follow (vss. 566 ff.).<sup>158</sup>

Equally simple is the readjustment of the setting in the *Ajax* of Sophocles. During the first half of the play the scene represents the hut or tent of Ajax in the Greek encampment on the coast of the Troad. At verse 692, announcing that he "will seek out

<sup>158</sup> Like the benches of the Pnyx in the *Acharnians* these may, however, have been put in place before the opening of the play. Their introduction during the ode which precedes the court scene (vss. 490-565) seems to me improbable (p. 73). But von Wilamowitz does not share this view. He says (*Aeschyli Tragoediae*, 1914, p. 310): "Dum chorus saltat, in fronte scaenae sellae ponuntur, ceteraque quibus in iudicio opus est apparantur." So Blass (*Eumeniden*, 1907, p. 135): "Die nachfolgende Gerichtsscene kann ich mir nur auf dem Areopage denken . . . also war während des vorangehenden Stasimons wieder eine kleine Szenenverwandlung vorgenommen." But the scene of the trial was not certainly the Areopagus; see Ridgeway, "The True Scene of the Second Act of the *Eumenides*," *Class. Rev.* XXI (1907), 163-68.

some untrodden spot" and there bury his sword, "hatefullest of weapons," as token of submission to the gods, Ajax departs. But his ambiguous words and a message from Teucer affright Teemessa, and she and the chorus hasten forth (vs. 814), "some to the westward bays, some toward the eastward," to "seek the man's ill-omened steps." At this point the scene is changed and becomes a lonely wooded glen (cf. *χωρον ἀστυβῆ*, vs. 657; *νάπους*, vs. 892), to whose sheltering depths the despairing Ajax makes his way and there falls upon his sword, burying it indeed, as he truly said, but — in his own heart! Here also, as in the *Eumenides*, the rearrangement of the setting was effected during the absence of both chorus and actors, but precisely how it was accomplished is not known.<sup>159</sup>

These two instances are generally referred to as the only examples in Greek drama of a change of the setting during the progress of a play.<sup>160</sup> But by rights at least one other should be included. This occurs between verses 63 and 64 of the *Eumenides*. The aged priestess, terror-stricken at what she has beheld within the temple, totters from the scene. The "stage" is deserted and there ensues a brief pause in the action. Then suddenly the interior of the temple is disclosed and there are discovered Orestes clinging to the *omphalos* and Apollo, his protector, standing near

<sup>159</sup> Some suppose that the trees and shubbery, which represent the woodland, were put in place before the beginning of the play; so, for example, Schübl, *op. cit.* Others, e.g., Bolle, *Die Bühne des Sophokles* (1902), p. 11, hold that the setting for the woodland scene was not arranged until after vs. 814.

Equally divergent too are the views regarding the removal of the tent. Piderit (*Szenische Analyse des Sophokles Stückes Aias*, 1850) supposes that there was no change whatever. Bethe (*Prolegomena*, 1896, pp. 125 ff.) relies upon the *eccyclema*. Reisch (*op. cit.*, p. 212) suggests that the front wall of the tent was drawn aside to right and to left, thus disclosing the set for the woodland glen, which had been previously arranged behind the scenes. Flickinger (*op. cit.*, p. 244), supposes "that one of the side doors in the front of the scene-building was left open to represent the entrance to the glen, and that around and behind it were set panels painted to suggest the woodland coast and glen." *Alia alii*.

<sup>160</sup> Flickinger (*op. cit.*, pp. 235, 250) thinks that he detects also in the *Alceste* (vss. 747-860) "a slight change of scene" (= setting?). But he admits that the evidence is not clear. Petersen (*op. cit.*, p. 561), cites this passage as evidence for the use of upper, as well as lower, parodi — an interpretation that will meet with little favor. See my review in *Class. Phil.* XIII (1918), 216 ff.

at hand with Hermes; while about them in a group are seen the dark and hideous forms of the sleeping Furies. The way in which this disclosure was effected is not certain. Indeed, the explanations that have been offered are legion.<sup>161</sup> But whatever the manner of its accomplishment, it constitutes, in my opinion, a genuine instance of a change of the setting. The new set continues in use until verse 234.<sup>162</sup>

Be this as it may, the evidence of the dramas seems to show that only on rare occasions did a change of scene *within* a play involve a modification of the setting. But between plays this must have been of frequent occurrence. For in the fifth century, at the greater Dionysia at least, there appear to have been regularly three series of dramatic performances, each series consisting of five plays and each constituting the program of a single day. True, the evidence is somewhat hazy, but this is to-day the prevailing interpretation. In other words, it is generally believed that on each of three successive days there were presented in rapid succession five dramas, and that each of these series was composed regularly of three tragedies, a satyr-play and a comedy.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Many scholars, following the scholiast, assume the use of the *eccyclema* (p. 83); so most recently Flickinger (*op. cit.*, pp. 286, 287). Others dissent (for example, Neckel, *Das Ekkyklema*, 1890, pp. 12, 13; Reisch, *Das griech. Theater*, 1896, p. 244; Rees, "The Function of the *Πρόθυρον* in the Production of Greek Plays," *Class. Phil.* X (1915), 130.)

In my judgment any explanation that involves the assumption that the Furies are not seen, be it ever so dimly, until after the departure of Orestes (vs. 93) or the disappearance (vs. 139) of the ghost of Clytaemnestra (*e.g.* G. Hermann, *Opusc.* VI, pt. 2, p. 163; Neckel, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Reisch, *op. cit.*, p. 243; Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 287) is dramatically unsound. Niejahr (*De Pollucis Loco qui ad Rem Scenicam Spectat* (1885, p. 5) states clearly the reasons for this view.

<sup>162</sup> See the preceding note (second paragraph). For somewhat similar, though less striking, discoveries see the *Ajax* of Sophocles, vs. 346, where Ajax is shown within his tent; and *The Mad Heracles* of Euripides, vs. 1029, where Heracles is seen within his house with the dead bodies of his wife and children at his feet. In these, and in other instances, many scholars assume that the *eccyclema* (p. 83) was used. But this is very doubtful; see Neckel, *Das Ekkyklema* (1890), and Rees, "The Function of the *Πρόθυρον*," etc., *Class. Phil.* X (1915), 129 ff.

<sup>163</sup> The three tragedies and the satyr-play were together known technically as a *didascalía* (teaching, presentation), and were regularly the work of a single poet.

That a comedy was presented on the same day as the *didascalía* has some-



Even those who dissent from this view are unanimous in acknowledging that the tragedies and the satyric drama constituted a single group. So far as concerns scenic arrangements the point is not of vital importance. For it is clear that whether the series consisted of four plays or of five, one and the same set cannot have been employed throughout. The scene of the satyr-plays was often, if not indeed regularly, a country region with trees, rocks and the like, and frequently a cave. Comedy chose a variety of settings, while even in tragedy the usual background of house or temple was not uniformly employed (p. 49).

Unfortunately no single series has been preserved entire, not even a *didascalia*. The nearest approach to such a series is found in the Orestean trilogy of Aeschylus consisting of the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation-bearers* and the *Eumenides*, and requiring as settings respectively a palace, a palace and tomb, a temple. But that the scenic requirements were not always so simple and uniform is shown beyond a doubt by the group of dramas presented by Euripides in the year 431. This was composed, as the hypothesis (argument) to the *Medea* informs us, of the *Medea*, the *Philoctetes*, the *Dictys* and a satyric drama called the *Harvesters*. The *Medea* is extant and requires as a background a house or palace, as did also without doubt the *Dictys*.<sup>164</sup> But for the *Philoctetes* it was a mountain side with a cave, as in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles and probably also the *Philoctetes* of Aeschylus.<sup>165</sup> This Bethe denied, insisting that the setting for the *Philoctetes*, as for the *Medea* and the *Dictys*, must also have been a house.<sup>166</sup>

times been questioned, as by Reisch, *op. cit.*, p. 211; see also Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 322. But the evidence appears to be against this view; see Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-24; also Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 ff.

<sup>164</sup> See Apoll. 2, 4, 1 and 3, and Wecklein, *S.-B. d. k. b. Akad. der Wiss. z. München*, I (1888), 109 ff. There is no reason for doubting that a house formed the background, but complete proof is lacking.

<sup>165</sup> See, for example, the remarks of Jebb, *The Philoctetes of Sophocles*, p. xv.

<sup>166</sup> *Prolegomena* (1896), p. 200. He argues in the first place that not until about 420 did any play known to us require a setting other than a building. He excludes of course the earliest dramas of Aeschylus and also the *Cyclops*, "weil seine Zeit nicht feststeht." Whatever force this dubious argument may



But his arguments will not bear examination, and the traditional assumption is fully justified.<sup>167</sup>

We may assume then that for this series of plays the scene was changed from a house (*Medea*) to a mountain side (*Philoctetes*), back again to a house (*Dictys*), and finally to a country region (*Harvesters*). What setting was demanded by the comedy that is believed to have closed the day's performances is not known, and is unimportant. So the *Oedipus Coloneus* of Sophocles with its sacred grove was in all probability preceded or followed by a play or plays which required a temple or other building as the background. And there can be no doubt that in the history of the fifth-century drama there were scores, perhaps hundreds, of similar instances in which several changes of the set were necessary in the course of a single day.

once have possessed has since been nullified by the discovery of the *Ichneutae* of Sophocles (see Pearson, *Fragments of Sophocles*, I (1917), pp. 230, 231). His second argument is that the word in the paraphrase of Dion Chrysostom (or. lix) proves that in the Euripidean play the background represented a hut or house. But he deliberately suppresses the evidence of such passages as *Philoctetes* (Soph.), vs. 286: βαίᾱ τῇδ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ and vs. 298: οἰκουμένη . . . στέγῃ. In both of these, as in vs. 1262 (which Bethe cites), στέγῃ refers to the cave of Philoctetes. Compare also *Antig.*, vss. 888, 1100; Fragment (Soph.) 176, Nauck, ed. 2, and *Cyclops*, vs. 29.

<sup>167</sup> The suggestion of von Wilamowitz that Adesp. frag. 389, Nauck, ed. 2.: οὐκ ἔστ' ἐν ἀντροῖς λευκός, ὃ ξέν', ἀργυρός, belongs to the *Philoctetes* of Euripides cannot of course be substantiated.

It is perhaps worth noting that certain Etruscan caskets, which depict the scene between Philoctetes and the envoys, follow the Euripidean version. These represent Philoctetes as sitting before a cave. See Schlie, *Die Darstellungen des troischen Sagenkreise auf etruskischen Aschenkiste beschrieben*, etc. (1868), pp. 134-150; also Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, fig. 1483.

## VI

### HOW WERE THE CHANGES OF SETTING EFFECTED? VARIOUS THEORIES <sup>168</sup>

The significance of the changes of setting which were discussed in the preceding chapter is patent. A program consisting of a *didascalia* (p. 76) followed by a comedy, each of 'average length, could not have been completed in less than six or eight hours of continuous acting. It is evident, therefore, that long pauses between the separate plays for the readjustment of the setting would have been impracticable,<sup>169</sup> although it is possible of course that a longer interval may have been ordinarily allowed between the conclusion of the *didascalia* and the presentation of the comedy that followed. According to Robert this may have been even an hour in length.<sup>170</sup> But that so long an interval was

<sup>168</sup> Selected bibliography:

- Müller, *Die griechische Bühnenalterthümer* (1886), §§ 12, 13.  
 Oehmichen, *Das Bühnenwesen der Griechen und Römer* (1890), §§ 55, 56.  
 Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* (1889), pp. 164 ff.; *ibid.* (ed. 3, 1907), pp. 179 ff.  
 P. Gardner, "The Scenery of the Greek Stage," *Jour. Hell. Stud.* XIX (1899), 252-264.  
 Navarre, *Dionysos* (1895), pp. 122 ff.  
 Bethe, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Theaters im Alterthum* (1896), chaps. 5, 10.  
 Dörpfeld und Reisch, *Das griechische Theater* (1896), pp. 211 ff.  
 Barnett, *The Greek Drama* (1900), pp. 73 ff.  
 Mantzius, *A History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times*; translated by L. von Cossel, I (1903), 124 ff. The original was published in 1897.  
 Schübl, *Die Landschaft auf der Bühne des fünften vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts* (1912).  
 von Wilamowitz, *Aischylos, Interpretationen* (1914), especially pp. 10, 11.  
 Noack, *Σκηνή Τραγική* (1915).  
 Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918).

Other references are given in the footnotes.

<sup>169</sup> Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 323, allows seven to eight hours for the presentation of a *didascalia*.

<sup>170</sup> *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLIX (1897), 36. He is speaking of the

not required for the rearrangement of the set appears to be shown by the story which Pollux <sup>171</sup> relates about the comic actor Hermon, a contemporary of Aristophanes. Play after play was hissed off the stage in rapid succession, and Hermon was summoned long before he expected to be called. When wanted he was absent from the theater trying his voice, and so was not ready to appear. That so disconcerting an interruption of the proceedings might henceforth be avoided, the Athenians, continues Pollux, instituted the custom of blowing a trumpet at the commencement of each new performance.

In view of these considerations we are forced to the conclusion that the pauses between the separate dramas were of brief duration. How then were the changes of setting effected?

The discussions of this subject are peculiarly unsatisfactory, not only in the works of Müller <sup>172</sup> and Oehmichen and in those of the earlier writers whose theories Müller so admirably summarizes, but in the more recent treatises as well. Thus Haigh describes the different types of settings required, but gives no adequate consideration to the *manner* in which the set was changed from act to act and from play to play beyond suggesting the use of painted scenery "attached to the wall at the back of the stage" and of mechanical devices like the *eccyclema* and the *periacti* (p. 83). Unsatisfactory too, though far superior, is Gardner's essay, which was written in part as a protest against the views expressed by Haigh. Bethe's discussion is arbitrary and incomplete, while the argument of Dörpfeld and Reisch is vitiated throughout by the assumption of movable screens, and of other similar devices. The paragraphs in Navarre are brief and inconclusive; Barnett's summary, sketchy and uncritical. Mantzius merely glances at the subject; Schübl barely mentions it; von

erection of the scenery for the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, which "mit einiger-massen geschulten Arbeitskräften in einer Stunde leicht bewerkstelligen liess. Und so lange wird man die Zwischenpause doch unbedenklich bemessen dürfen."

<sup>171</sup> *Onomasticon*, IV, 88.

<sup>172</sup> For the treatises referred to in this paragraph see note 168.

Wilamowitz dismisses it with brief, though suggestive, comments; Petersen<sup>173</sup> virtually ignores it; Fiechter is silent.<sup>174</sup> By far the most satisfactory of all is the recent and thoroughly admirable discussion of the Greek theater by Flickinger, but even this treatise deals with this particular problem in a manner more or less incidental.

To extend this list were unnecessary. The results would remain the same; while the annotated editions, new and old alike, of the Greek dramatists merely add to the obfuscation.

The explanation of this unfortunate condition lies in the evidence itself. This is meager and uncertain. To some it has appeared as it were a stony field, barren and therefore negligible; but to others, as virgin plowland awaiting the tillage. Error has flourished with the truth like dandelion among the wheat, and the harvest has been a confused and diverse crop of multitudinous conclusions. One incitant of unsound conjecture has been neglect of the essential elements of the problem; another prolific source of error, here as elsewhere, the tendency to ascribe to an early period devices and usages of a later age.

An illustration of the last fault is found in the not uncommon assumption of a *scaena ductilis* or pair of movable screens that could be opened and pushed to either side like scenes in the modern theater. This, as we have already observed, is one of the chief fallacies in the argument of Dörpfeld and Reisch,<sup>175</sup> and Dörp-

<sup>173</sup> *Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915).

<sup>174</sup> *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914).

<sup>175</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 212, 214, etc. Compare the words of Robert (*Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLXIV, 1902, 430): "Die Vorstellung von eingeschobenen Wänden mit gemalter Landschaft, die unselige *scaena ductilis*, ist überhaupt die kränkste Stelle in Dörpfelds System, dessen Kernpunkt sie zum Glück nicht berührt." The error goes back to G. Hermann, *Opuscula* VI (1835), pt. 2, p. 165. Niejahr (*Quaestiones Aristophaneae Scaenicae*, 1877, p. 38) rejects it, as do Gardner (*op. cit.*, pp. 257, 258), and others. Flickinger (*op. cit.*) rightly ignores it.

The only mention of a *scaena ductilis* in classical literature is found in Servius' note on the *Georgics* of Virgil (III, 24): . . . "(scaena) ductilis tum cum tractis tabulatis hac atque illac species picturae nudabatur interior." Seneca in *Epist.* 88, 22 refers to such a device as one of the mechanical contrivances of the stage. But both writers are late. The sill discovered in the

field has recently avowed anew his belief,<sup>176</sup> but his words do not carry conviction. For the theory is rooted in the soil of unsubstantiated conjecture. This is true also of the kindred and widely prevalent assumption of large painted canvases, or the like, whether placed before the scene-building or attached to its front-wall.<sup>177</sup> This hypothesis rests upon the tradition regarding Agatharchus,<sup>178</sup> but it was effectually shattered by Gardner as long ago as 1899,<sup>179</sup> and has been questioned or definitely rejected by many others. So too the gratuitous assumption of a huge curtain large enough to conceal the background and the space immediately before it may be mentioned only to be dismissed. It is unsupported by evidence, and at the best would have been merely a means of concealing the setting, not of changing it.<sup>180</sup>

theater at Megalopolis and often explained as a runway for a *scaena ductilis* (*Das griechische Theater*, pp. 138 ff.) cannot have been used for this purpose (see Bethe, *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLIX, 1897, 724 ff.; Puchstein, *Die griechische Bühne* (1901), p. 90, and especially Fiechter, *op. cit.*, p. 19). Streit's conjectures and attempted reconstructions (*Das Theater. Untersuchungen über das Theaterbauwerk bei den klassischen und modernen Völkern* (1903), pp. 17 ff.) succeed in being merely damnatory. See further Durm, *Die Baukunst der Griechen* (ed. 3, 1910), pp. 482, 483.

<sup>176</sup> *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst. Anzeiger*, XXX (1915), 102: . . . "hat es doch zu allen Zeiten ausser den kleinen Pinakes auch grössere gemalte Skenen aus Holz oder Zeug gegeben, die vor die steinerne oder holzerne Skene gestellt oder gezogen werden konnten und aus mehreren solchen Prospektbildern bestanden haben mögen."

<sup>177</sup> Müller, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff.; Oehmichen, *op. cit.*, pp. 111 ff.; Dörpfeld-Reisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 210 ff.; Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* (1889), pp. 165 ff.; repeated in the second (1898) and third (1907) editions; Tucker, *The Choephori of Aeschylus* (1901), p. xli.; Starkie, *The Acharnians of Aristophanes* (1909), p. 6; Schübl, *op. cit.*, pp. 4 ff.; Bywater, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry* (1909), p. 137; etc.

<sup>178</sup> He was a painter and was employed, Vitruvius tells us (VII, Praef. § 1), while Aeschylus was still presenting plays "*scaenam facere*"; "*primum Agatharcus Athenis Aeschylō docente tragoediam scaenam fecit et de ea commentarium reliquit.*" Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449 a, 18) ascribes the introduction of *σκηνογραφία* to Sophocles: *τρεῖς* (i.e. a third actor) *δὲ καὶ σκηνογραφίαν Σοφοκλῆς*. But precisely what Vitruvius meant by *scaena* and Aristotle by *σκηνογραφία* is not clear. In my opinion the reference is to the scene-building, not to painted scenery. See the next note, also note 199, and page 67.

<sup>179</sup> See note 168.

<sup>180</sup> See the sane comments of Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 243 ff. The use of a curtain is assumed by Bethe, *op. cit.*, pp. 187 ff., and *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst.* XV (1900), 73, by Dörpfeld-Reisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 213, 253 ff., and by many others. Particularly pathetic is the "zügellose Phantasie" of Streit (*op. cit.* (see note



But there are two (possibly three) mechanical devices for changing the scene that present a stronger claim for recognition. The first of these was known as the *periacti* (περίακτοι) and is described as a pair of revolving prisms with a scene painted on each of their several sides. It is mentioned only by late writers,<sup>181</sup> and cannot with certainty be ascribed to the fifth century. In spite of this fact, however, because of the evident simplicity, not to say crudeness, of such a contrivance, many scholars accept it in good faith. The second was known as the *eccyclema* (ἐκκύκλημα) and presents a more serious and more perplexing problem. This was certainly in use during the closing years of the fifth century, possibly earlier, and was employed for showing or suggesting interior scenes. The ancient descriptions are confused. It is sometimes spoken of in such a way as to suggest a wheeled platform which could be pushed out through a door,<sup>182</sup> at other times it is referred to as a wheeled and revolving platform.<sup>183</sup> More than this we do not know, except that it was used by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* (exhibited in 425), verses 408 ff., and in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* (c. 411), verses 95 ff. (cf. vs. 265), in both of which passages the author is plainly burlesquing the tragic poet Euripides. Naturally modern opinion is divided. There are those who believe that the *eccyclema* was a semicircular platform attached to a portion of the front wall of the scene-build-

175), pp. 11, 14) : About the year 427/6 a large curtain was introduced. It was stretched between the *paraskenia* and naturally would sag at the center. In order then that it should not drag upon the ground when opened, it would be necessary to leave the two ends suspended in the air. But in such a drama as the *Suppliants* of Euripides, in which a group of actors took their positions before the opening of the play, the spectators would be highly amused by "den komischen Anblick des Fusswirrwarrs." Ergo, to avoid exciting the risibles of the audience an elevated stage was rendered necessary !

<sup>181</sup> Pollux, IV, 126 ; Vitruvius, V, 6 ; Servius on Virgil, Georgics III, 24.

<sup>182</sup> So especially Pollux, IV, 128.

<sup>183</sup> Scholia on Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, vs. 64 (στραφέντα μηχανήματα), *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, vs. 408 (μηχάνημα ξύλινον τρόχους ἔχον, ὅπερ περιστρεφόμενον), *Clouds* of Aristophanes, vs. 184 (στραφέντος τοῦ ἐγκυκλήματος), Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 12, p. 418 Dind. (σκευὸς τι ὑπότροχον . . . οὐ στρεφόμενον).

ing and the whole revolved about a pivot after the manner of a butterfly valve;<sup>184</sup> others adhere to the older theory of a trundle-platform;<sup>185</sup> while Flickinger contends that the term was generic and that both types were used, the former until about the year 430 B.C. (see Fig. 22), the latter during the closing decades of the century.<sup>186</sup>

Equally divergent are the theories regarding the extent to which the *eccyclema* was employed. The extreme conservatives

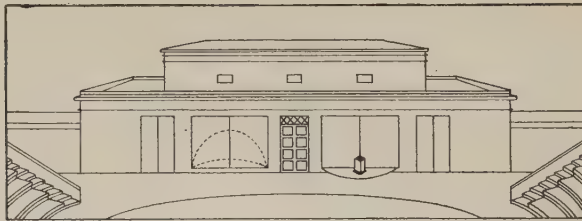


FIG. 22. — THE SCENE-BUILDING OF THE EARLY FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER (FLICKINGER).

accepting the statements of the scholiasts assume its general use by Aeschylus and Sophocles as well as by Euripides and Aristophanes, not to mention the host of poets whose plays have been lost. The extreme radicals on the other hand deny the credibility of the scholia and reject the *eccyclema* except when the evidence in its favor is overwhelming. Between these two positions there is every shade of opinion. It is largely a matter

<sup>184</sup> See especially Exon, "A New Theory of the Eccyclema," *Hermathena* XI (1901), 133 ff., who assumes that there was a separate *eccyclema* adjoining each of the three doors. For various anticipations of Exon's theory see Reisch's article on the *ἐκκύκλημα* in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encycl. der class. Altertumswiss.*, V (1903).

<sup>185</sup> Rees, *Class. Phil.* X (1915), 134 ff., concludes that it was merely an easy chair or couch on wheels.

<sup>186</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 285 ff. He holds further that *exostra* (*ἐξώστρα*) was but another and more specific name for the second type of the *eccyclema*; compare Pollux IV, 129: *τὴν δὲ ἐξώστραν ταύτην τῷ ἐκκυκλήματι νομίζουσι*; also Hesychius: *ἐξώστρα· ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τὸ ἐκκύκλημα*. Those who deny that the *eccyclema* was a trundle-platform reject this testimony; see Reisch, *op. cit.* (see note 184).

of temperament, and no compromise seems possible. *Quot homines, tot sententiae*.<sup>187</sup>

Dismissing these vexatious questions, which after all concern merely the superficies of the subject, let us strike at the heart of the matter and inquire what theories have been advanced in recent years with reference to the scene-building itself. Here as elsewhere the evidence is so defective that we need not be surprised at a wide divergency of view. But to mention every shade and variety of hypotheses elicited by this problem of the change of settings would be both wearisome and gratuitous. A few of the more typical theories alone will suffice. These fall naturally into two main groups as follows :

1. The scene-building was taken down between plays as occasion demanded and rebuilt in new form or even entirely removed.

2. The *skene* remained standing until the end of the day's performances, or, better, until the close of the dramatic festival.

The first of these theories was originally proposed by Dörpfeld with reference to the earlier period,<sup>188</sup> but was extended by Robert so as to include even the late fifth century as well, and to apply in its extreme form to such plays as the *Birds* of Aristophanes (exhibited in 414 B.C.), the *Antiope* and *Andromeda* of Euripides, and the *Philoctetes* (409 B.C.) and *Oedipus at Colonus* (402 B.C.) of Sophocles.<sup>189</sup> Barnett states it frankly : "In some dramas of this

<sup>187</sup> A valuable study of the problem is that by Neckel, *Das Ekkyklema* (1890), whose innumerable citations of the earlier literature constitute an illuminating commentary. Neckel himself is one of the radicals.

<sup>188</sup> *Das griechische Theater* (1896), p. 371 : "Während ursprünglich die Skene nicht nur am Ende des Festes, sondern auch zuweilen nach jeder Aufführung fortgenommen oder verändert wurde, ging man bald dazu über, den Bau selbst stehen zu lassen und nur seine Vorderwand den aufzuführenden Stücken entsprechend zu verändern oder mit andern Wörten, man errichtete vor der Skene ein Proskenion." See also p. 287.

<sup>189</sup> *Hermes*, XXXII (1897), 438 : "So lernen wir die Skene des fünften Jahrhunderts als eine einfache Bretterbude kennen, die sich mit leichter Mühe zwischen den einzelnen Stücken abreißen und wieder aufbauen oder verändern liess. Auch mehrere Buden dieser Art konnten leicht neben einander errichtet werden." See also note 170 (p. 79) and *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLIX (1897), 36 : "Die Vögel lassen sich scenisch nicht vom Philoctet und einer Reihe anderer Stücke trennen, in denen der Schauplatz nicht vor einem Gebäude,

period [that is, the closing decades of the fifth century] no *skene* seems to have been used. The scene was here the open country in which 'rocks, if needed, could be more easily built up of stones and boards' (Robert).<sup>190</sup> And Robert himself in his article on the *Ichneutae* of Sophocles<sup>191</sup> has recently reasserted the doctrine. "There is therefore," he writes with reference to this play, "no scenic background, but merely trees in the orchestra — the old Aeschylean setting to which toward the end of the fifth century tragedy also again returns (*Andromeda*, *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus at Colonus*)." This is the view also of von Wilamowitz, who says with regard to the scenic arrangements of the *Ichneutae*: "There is no back-wall, the cave is underground."<sup>192</sup> The theory now appears to have at least the partial sanction also of Flickinger.<sup>193</sup> "The scene-building of this period" (about 465 B.C.) he writes (p. 66), "must be thought of as quite unpretentious. . . . Its construction was flimsy enough for it to be capable of being easily rebuilt or remodeled to meet the scenic requirements of each

sondern im Freien liegt. Es sind, ausser den genannten beiden Stücken, die *Andromeda*, die *Antiope*, der *Oidipus auf Kolonos*, der *Kyklops*, also lauter Dramen aus dem Ende des fünften Jahrhunderts, einer Periode, wo sich in der Theaterentwicklung überhaupt vielfach eine Rückkehr zum Alten bemerklich macht. . . . Was berechtigt uns nun zu der Supposition, dass jene Höhlen und Strandfelsen, auf die Vorderwand der *Skene* aufgemalt und nicht wie bei Aischylos körperlich dargestellt, aus Bohlen und Steinen aufgebaut waren? Vielleicht lagen sie nicht mehr in der Mitte, sondern in der hinteren Hälfte der *Orchestra*, das wage ich nicht zu entscheiden. Aber das behaupte ich, dass die alte Art der Herstellung die einfachere, praktischere, billigere und wirkungsvollere war."

<sup>190</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74, note 2. On page 71 he remarks: "My own views are in the main those of Robert."

<sup>191</sup> *Hermes*, XLVII (1912), 536. The *Ichneutae* is a satyr-play.

<sup>192</sup> *Aischylos, Interpretationen* (1914), p. 10. After remarking that the *Cyclops* requires a back-wall he continues: "Dagegen sieht es fast so aus, als hätte die Tragödie der letzten Zeit des Jahrhunderts wie im anderen auch in der Anlage der Bühne archaische Neigungen gehabt . . . auch der *Oedipus auf Kolonos* kann gar keine architektonisch dekorierte Hinterwand haben, und da denkt man sich am besten eine Tiefe des Spielplatzes, ähnlich den *Ichneuten*. Nur in die Tiefe kann, so viel ich sehe, *Oedipus* abgehen."

See also *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Altertum*, XXIX (1912), 457, note 1: "Ansteigendes Gelände wird für den *Kolonos* des *Oedipus*, der keine Hausfront zeigen kann, und manche andere Tragödien und Komödien anzunehmen sein."

<sup>193</sup> *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918).



drama, for of course it was not until long after the introduction of a scenic background that the plays were uniformly laid before a palace or temple." See also page 228. But that the scene-building was sometimes entirely removed, as Dörpfeld, Robert and von Wilamowitz suggest, the author does not state, although in one passage at least this seems to be implied.<sup>194</sup>

Be this as it may the theory appears to me to be most improbable. For, whatever the building may have been in 465 B.C., before the end of the century certainly it became, as we saw in chapter 3 (p. 32) and again in chapter 4 (p. 59), a structure of considerable size and substantialness. It was two stories in height and must have been at least twenty meters long and more than four meters deep, and strong enough to support several persons at a time upon its roof. To suppose that a structure of so great magnitude and strength was taken down and rebuilt between plays, or even entirely removed, is most unreasonable.<sup>195</sup> For, as we have already observed, with a program consisting of four or five performances, long intervals between plays for the readjustment of the setting would have been impracticable.<sup>196</sup> Significant too in this connection is the story related by Pollux about the comic actor Hermon

<sup>194</sup> He writes (pp. 226, 227) : "That such a primitive theater [*i. e.* one without scene-building or back-scene, but in which "there might be erected for temporary use some such theatrical 'property' as an altar or a tomb,"] would suffice for the needs of that earlier age, [that is, from 499 to about 465 B.C.] or even a later period, is proven by the remains of the structure at Thoricus, which was never brought to a higher state of development, and by the fact that even at a later period dramatists sometimes voluntarily reverted to this unpretentious stage-setting. For example, in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* the background represented the untrodden grove of the Eumenides, so that practically all the entrances and exits were restricted to the parodi." But see pp. 66 (bottom), and 235, 236, where the use of painted *pinakes* between the columns of the proscenium is mentioned. See also p. 231. The scenic arrangements required for the *Ichneutae* he does not discuss.

<sup>195</sup> The supporters of this theory have of course assumed that the fifth-century *skene* was a small and flimsy affair.

<sup>196</sup> Robert, as we have seen (note 170), allows an hour in the case of the *Lysistrata*. But for the *Ichneutae* or the *Oedipus at Colonus*, according to his theory, even an hour would scarcely be sufficient. One may compare the remark of Müller (*Bühnenalterthümer* (1886), p. 162), that "im fünften Jahrhundert die Decoration nur mühsam und in längerer Zeit zwischen zwei Stücken verändert werden konnte."



(p. 80). If on such occasions, when play after play was hissed off the stage in rapid succession, the scenic requirements of the rejected dramas resembled, let us say, those of the Euripidean *didascalía* of the year 431 (p. 77) or of that which included the *Oedipus at Colonus*, the day's entertainment would have consisted chiefly in watching the feverish labors of scene-shifters and stage-carpenters. Surely it is far more reasonable to assume that the scene-building remained intact throughout the day, if not indeed throughout the dramatic festival.<sup>197</sup>

This brings us to the second theory mentioned above, that the *skene* remained standing until the end of the day's performances or even until the close of the festival. The hypothesis appears in two forms:

1. The *skene* was painted to represent a house.
2. The *skene* was not itself adorned, but was in various ways more or less completely screened from view.

The first of these hypotheses is stated in an extreme form by Sheppard,<sup>198</sup> who says: "It is improbable that the appearance of the painted building was changed for different plays; in general the words of the drama would sufficiently indicate whether it represented a temple or a palace. Further indications may have been given by the showing of conventional symbols or tokens. . . . But the words alone are generally enough." This is a modification of the theory as maintained by Gardner,<sup>199</sup> namely, that the painted scene-building was not changed from play to play, but may have been on occasion partially concealed by means of curtains. "Any differentia of scenery necessary for the purposes of

<sup>197</sup> Haigh, in *The Attic Theatre*, ed. 2 (1896), p. 147, assumes that the scene-building was a permanent structure and was not taken down even at the close of the festival; so also ed. 3, revised by Pickard-Cambridge (1907), p. 117.

<sup>198</sup> *Greek Tragedy* (1911), p. 14.

<sup>199</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 168). Gardner based his conclusions in large part on the tradition regarding Agatharchus (see note 178) and his interest in perspective. In Gardner's judgment Agatharchus painted the scene-building itself, not detachable screens. See also Kroll in *Satura Viadrina* (1896), p. 63; Robert, *Gött. Gel. Anz.*, CLXIV (1902), 421; and Noack, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 ff.

any particular play," he writes, "could be added either by the use of *periacti* [see above, p. 83], or by the introduction of very simple stage properties" (p. 264). "If the edifice had to serve as a temple, it would do very well with slight adaptation. If it had to serve, as in comedy, as a row of private houses, it would also serve. There is more difficulty in seeing how it would serve in the satyric plays, where rocks and caves were supposed to mark the scene. . . . We may fairly suppose that a few rocks strewn on the stage, perhaps a curtain or two to hide part of the *skene*, would suffice to satisfy the audience that it was a glen or a mountain-side ' (p. 257).

It is clear from these words that Gardner himself was not insensible to one of the objections to the theory which he was defending. But even if we grant that this objection is not insuperable, we are confronted by another that is far more serious, and this is the failure to account for the *proskenion*. Gardner assumed that in the fifth century there was a low stage which gradually became higher and higher until the thirteen-foot *proskenion* was attained, which he believed was also a stage. But, as we shall see later (p. 109), this assumption is untenable. Another objection lies in the omission to provide for the portico-scenes, which, as we saw in chapter 4 (p. 55), are both frequent and important. This reconstruction of the scene-building of the fifth century, therefore, must be rejected as unsatisfactory.

Let us examine, then, the second hypothesis mentioned above, that the *skene* was not itself adorned, but served as background and support for the erection of various scenic decorations. One of the espousers of this theory is Haigh.<sup>200</sup> "The wooden hoarding" at the back of the stage was nothing more than the front of the actors' room; at first it had no scenic significance. But by the time of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus (458 B.C.) "the old actors' booth had become a regular scenic background. The bare hoarding was covered with painting, to represent a palace, or a temple,

<sup>200</sup> *Op. cit.*, ed. 3, pp. 179 ff.

or whatever else might be required. This conclusion, which may be deduced from the extant dramas themselves, is confirmed by the ancient traditions as to the introduction of scene-painting" (p. 181). "The scenery consisted of painted curtains or boards, attached to the wall at the back of the stage" (p. 186). "It need hardly be remarked," he continues (p. 188), "that the doors of the building represented by the painted scenery would correspond more or less closely with the permanent doors in the back-wall, so as to admit of easy ingress and egress to the actors. In the same way, if the scene was a cavern in a country region, the entrance to the cavern would be made to correspond with the central door in the wall at the back. Concerning the manner in which the scenery was finished off at the top nothing can be laid down for certain." But this doctrine of painted scenery, whether attached to the scene-building or placed before it, rests upon very insecure foundations and, as we saw above (p. 82), is no doubt false.

Another adherent is Bolle,<sup>201</sup> who holds that the difficulties of the scenic arrangements can be most easily solved by assuming that there was erected on the orchestra-terrace a rude, unadorned, wooden dressing-booth, two to three meters in height, and that about and on and above this structure the scenic background (der Spielhintergrund) was constructed. This would consist of painted boards, branches or bushes attached to wooden supports, and the like, and could be changed to suit the needs of different plays in a very few minutes. This is simpler and more satisfactory than the assumption of painted scenery, but as it does not explain the development of the scene-building in the fourth century (p. 32), this view also must be dismissed as unconvincing.

Another alleged means of concealing the *skene* and of indicating a change of locality was the *scaena ductilis*. But, as we have

<sup>201</sup> *Die Bühne des Sophokles* (1902), pp. 11, 23, etc. See also his *Die Bühne des Aeschylus* (1906).

already seen (p. 81), the use of such a device in the fifth century rests upon unsubstantiated conjecture, and this assumption, like the others, must therefore be rejected as unsound.

There remains for consideration the difficult question of the *proskenion* (p. 4) as a decorative screen and as a device for changing the setting. Mantzius<sup>202</sup> states the theory as follows:

"In order that the *skene* [that is, the dressing-booth] might be worthy of forming a portion of the festal domain, it had to appear in a decent shape, and could not remain merely a modest wooden shed. So a kind of decorative façade was built in front of the dressing-apartment, a row of wooden pillars, the intervals between which were filled with planks [the translator means "panels"], canvas, rugs and hides. This decorative wall was called the *proskenion*. . . . The *proskenion* was ten to twelve feet high. . . . Its roof was flat, and where the *skene* was in two stories, the roof of the *proskenion* formed a kind of terrace, to which the upper story of the *skene* served as background."

This theory owes its origin to Dörpfeld<sup>1</sup> (see note 188). It was hinted at by Reisch in his review of Müller's *Bühnenalterthümer*,<sup>203</sup> but was, I believe, first clearly stated by Kawerau,<sup>204</sup> and was expounded at length by Dörpfeld himself and by his collaborator Reisch in the pages of *Das griechische Theater* (1896).<sup>205</sup>

But it is noteworthy that the statement of the theory in *Das griechische Theater* differs in certain important particulars from

<sup>202</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 168), I, pp. 130, 131.

<sup>203</sup> *Zeitschr. f. Oester. Gymnasien* (1887), 270 ff.

<sup>204</sup> In his article on "Theatergebäude" in Baumeister's *Denkmäler*, III (1889), 1734; also briefly by Dörpfeld himself in his review of Haigh's *Attic Theatre*, *Berl. phil. Wochenschr.*, X (1890), 466. It should be noted that Höpken's theory of the *proskenion*, which is sometimes linked with Dörpfeld's, was essentially different (*De Theatro Attico*, 1884).

<sup>205</sup> It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the theory has been adopted by many scholars. But the various publications which have appeared since 1890, including annotated texts, state the theory in a variety of ways and sometimes exhibit genuine confusion. The most recent statement is found in Flickinger's *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), pp. 58, 59, 68, 235, 285, etc. His discussion of the relation of the *proskenion* to the *logeion* (pp. 58 ff.) is particularly commendable.

that given by Mantzius and by many other scholars since the year 1890. The authors employ the word *proskenion* in a generic sense. They refer to it, indeed, as a "decorative wall" (Schmuckwand),<sup>206</sup> but make it clear that in their judgment the stereotyped form consisting of columns or posts with intervening panels developed only gradually and did not prevail until the Hellenistic period. Thus in his discussion of the Hellenistic theater Dörpfeld says (p. 381): "In conclusion, we should not forget that the scene-buildings (die Skenen) and the *proskenia* [note the plural] at first actually resembled those structures which they were meant to represent. Only gradually did they develop into a conventional decorative screen (aber allmählich zu einer typischen Schmuckwand wurden), which bore little resemblance to simple dwelling houses." Again he writes (p. 376): "As in the earlier period, so also in the fourth century, the background required was sometimes a palace, sometimes a house; or again it was a temple, or a cave, or any other suitable setting. These different decorative arrangements must have been provided by means of movable *proskenia* of wholly different forms (Diese verschiedenen Dekorationen mussten durch bewegliche Proskenen von ganz verschiedener Form gebildet werden)." And again with reference to the fourth-century theater (p. 70): "What form the *proskenion* had in the different dramas must be gathered from the plays themselves. The remains of the theater [of Lycurgus] furnish no clue. But no one can deny that the large space [inclosed by the *paraskenia*], which was nearly twenty-one meters long by about five meters deep, was of sufficient size to make

<sup>206</sup> pp. 373, 376, 377, 380, 381. Compare Dörpfeld, *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst.*, XVI (1901), 23: "Proskenion ursprünglich eine Vorskene, also eine vor der Skene befindliche Dekoration"; also *Athenische Mittheilungen*, XXVIII (1903), 390: "Proskenion eine Vorskene, eine Schmuckwand (Dekoration) bedeutet."

This definition has been repeatedly questioned; so recently by Fiechter, *op. cit.* (see note 174), p. 50, note 3: "Προσκήνιον kann nicht Vorskene heissen. . . . In Proskenion steckt ein Diminutivum: σκήνιον. Proskenion ist also eine kleine Skene vor der Skene, eben ein Vorbau." See also p. 32: "So war sie [die Proskenionwand] auch nicht des dekorativen Elementes wegen errichtet." See below, p. 109.



possible the erection of a portico of a temple, or several houses, or a towered citadel, or the front of a palace." And finally (p. 377), the form of *proskenion* which consisted of columns and panels would be suitable for representing only a house or a palace. "All other structures (Dekorationen) of this earlier period [that is, the fifth and fourth centuries], for example, a temple or a citadel, would have had to be of different dimensions and various forms, although erected on the same spot (werden zwar an derselben Stelle, aber in anderen Abmessungen und mit veränderten Kunstformen ausgeführt worden sein)."

These different varieties included not only the more substantial *proskenia* (grössere Proskenien) in the form of porticos and other architectural structures, but decorative screens as well, resembling curtains or flats.<sup>207</sup>

These are the more striking passages in which the authors of *Das griechische Theater* present their theory of the *proskenion*. It is, in brief, that from an early variety of types there gradually emerged the conventional *proskenion* of the Hellenistic theater. This form was introduced originally to represent a palace or a house and became the prevailing type only when the scenic requirements became stereotyped. And as recently as the year 1915, Dörpfeld has restated the doctrine in substantially the same language.<sup>208</sup>

But why the Greeks should have adopted a decorative screen some sixty feet in length and twelve or thirteen feet high and adorned with columns to represent a house or similar building, whereas all other structures were differently and more realistically represented, neither Dörpfeld nor any of his followers has ever

<sup>207</sup> Page 377 : "aus grossen, nur gemalten Schmuckwänden" ; "eine vorhangartige Decorationswand" ; page 214 : "Es liegt nahe anzunehmen, dass die Vorderwand des Proskenion manchmal nur aus bemalten, in Rahmen gespannten Zeug bestand."

<sup>208</sup> *Jahrb. d. arch. Inst. Anz.* XXX (1915), 98. A modification of this theory is presented by Noack (*op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.). According to this author the *proskenion* developed from scenic representations of the Vorhalle of a Telesterion or Hall of Initiation-ceremonies.

been able to show. The hypothesis constitutes one of the weak points in Dörpfeld's reconstruction of the theater, and it has been repeatedly and vigorously attacked.<sup>209</sup> Only occasionally does one find the theory stated in its original form;<sup>210</sup> more commonly is it assumed that the columnated *proskēnion* was adopted before the close of the fifth century.<sup>211</sup> But no one, so far as I am aware, has ever offered a convincing explanation of the origin of this decorative scheme. Before grappling with this problem, however, we must turn aside to consider briefly one of the earlier types of *proskēnia* postulated by Dörpfeld.

<sup>209</sup> As by Puchstein, *Die griechische Bühne* (1901), pp. 22 ff. ; Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *The Attic Theatre*, pp. 152, 153 ; Fiechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 ff.

<sup>210</sup> As by Bodensteiner, *Das antike Theater* (1902), p. 12.

<sup>211</sup> So most recently Flickinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 68, 235, 237, who assigns its introduction to the years 430-425 B.C.



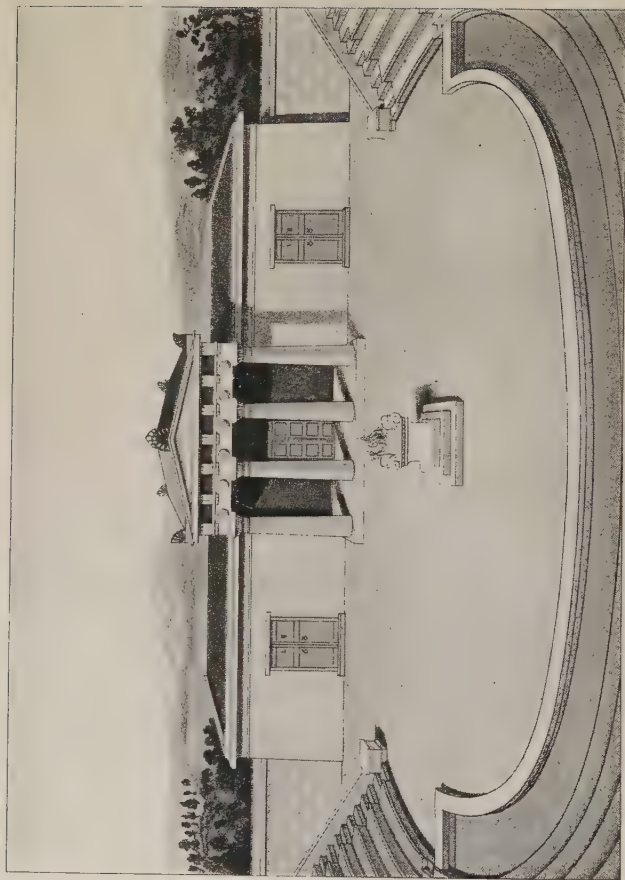


FIG. 23. — THE SCENE-BUILDING OF THE FIFTH-CENTURY THEATER (DÖRFFELD).

## VII

### THE ALLEGED *PROTHYRON* OF THE VASE-PAINTINGS

Among the various *proskenia* which Dörpfeld assumes were in use during the fifth and fourth centuries should doubtless be included the columned porch, with stylobate, entablature and gable, which forms a prominent feature of Dörpfeld's well known reconstruction of the scene-building in the fifth century (Fig. 23).<sup>212</sup> A structure of this sort, it is supposed, would serve as a realistic representation of a palace or a temple and would be particularly useful in the case of portico-scenes (p. 55), while its stylobate would provide a convenient, though low, platform which could be used in lieu of a stage.

The archaeological argument adduced by Dörpfeld in support of the hypothesis that the *skene* was sometimes so adorned may be briefly summarized as follows. Many Greek vase-paintings depict scenes that appear to have been inspired by the contemporary drama. These fall into several distinct groups, the majority of which were executed in southern Italy during the fourth and third centuries. Some of these paintings reflect unmistakably the influence of Euripidean tragedy and are characterized in several instances by the presence of a small, columned structure or *aedicula*, which apparently represents a palace (Figs. 24, 27-29). But in the fourth century palaces of this type could hardly be found elsewhere than in the theater. Some of the pictures indeed in which these buildings occur clearly show in other respects the influence of the drama and dramatic conventions, and the

<sup>212</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, fig. 93, p. 373. It is reproduced in color by Cybulski (*Tabulae quibus Antiquitates Graecae et Romanae illustrantur*, 12); also by Durm (*Die Baukunst der Griechen* (ed. 3, 1910), p. 470), but without approbation.



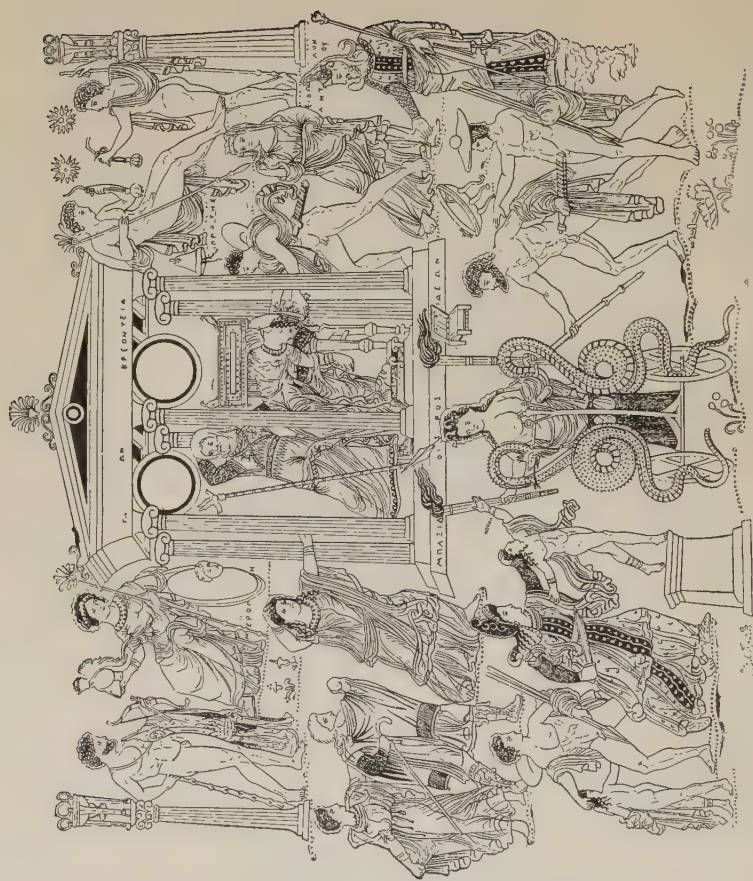


FIG. 24. — VASE-Painting REPRESENTING THE VENGEANCE OF MEDEA; FROM THE MEDEA-VASE AT MUNICH.

idea of placing the leading characters within the building in these paintings may also have been suggested by the tragic performances, many of whose scenes were enacted in the colonnade (Vorhalle) of the palace. We may assume therefore that these little structures are conventionalized reproductions of a *prothyron* or portico erected before the central portion of the scene-building. And if a *proskenion* of this description was employed in the fourth century, it follows *a fortiori* that it must have been in common use in the preceding century also.<sup>213</sup>

Relying on this course of reasoning Dörpfeld restores the scene-building with a projecting porch whose floor is elevated above the level of the orchestra (Fig. 23); while his collaborator Reisch boldly makes this restoration the basis for the interpretation of certain passages in the fifth-century drama. But the argument when tested fails to convince. Its validity has often been questioned.<sup>214</sup> But because it has exercised a not inconsiderable

<sup>213</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, p. 208 (Reisch): "Auf Vasenbildern sehen wir solche Vorplätze, die um eine Stufe über den davorliegenden Platz erhöht und von einem weit vorspringenden Thürdach überdeckt sind. Ähnliche Prothyra wird man bei den Theaterhäusern voraussetzen dürfen; die Stufe des Prothyron gab dem Schauspieler Gelegenheit, wo es vorteilhaft erschien, einen erhöhten Standplatz zu gewinnen." *Ibid.*, p. 309 (Dörpfeld): "Diese Säulengeschmückten Bauten stellen . . . durchweg Paläste vor, und die Vorbilder für solche, mit Giebeln ausgestattete Paläste wird man im IV. Jahrhundert schwerlich anderswo als im Theater suchen dürfen." Page 310: "Wie wenig den Malern dabei an einer getreuen Wiedergabe eines wirklichen Vorbildes gelegen war, geht schon daraus hervor, dass sie die Säulenhalle als eine freistehende, auch rückwärts offene Halle zeichnen, ohne einen hinteren Bau oder auch nur eine Hinterwand anzugeben, so dass es unklar bleibt, ob sie die dargestellten Vorgänge wirklich in der Vorhalle oder im Innern des Palästes gedacht wissen wollten. Dennoch darf man wohl die schlanke leichte Bauart dieser Hallen auf die Holzarchitektur der Proskenionbauten zurückführen und ihre kleinen Abmessungen daraus erklären, dass die 2-4 säuligen Hallen vor dem Mittelthor des Theaterpalastes als nächstes Vorbild gedient haben."

<sup>214</sup> As, for example, by Fiechter, *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914), p. 42: "Ob jene Hallen oder aediculae auf Vasenbildern des IV. Jahrhunderts mit Dörpfeld-Reisch, a. O. S. 308, mit dem Theater in Verbindung zu bringen sind, bleibt unsicher. Gewiss können ähnliche Dekorationen im Drama des IV. Jahrhunderts vor die Skene gestellt worden sein, aber aus diesen Bildern ist das nicht zu entnehmen." Flickinger (*The Greek Theater and its Drama*, 1918, p. 237) is less positive. He remarks: "But perhaps these paintings are only conventionalized representations of the proskenium colonnade itself. In any case it is important to observe that no background corresponding to the scene-building is indicated on the vases."

influence upon the discussions of the *proskenion*,<sup>215</sup> and because it has in recent years been brought again to life and utilized, as it was by Reisch, to interpret certain scenes in the drama of the fifth century,<sup>216</sup> it still challenges attention. If the columned structures of these paintings actually represent *prothyra*, then Dörpfeld's proposed reconstruction may be regarded as reasonable. But until more cogent arguments shall have been advanced in substantiation of this hypothesis the persistent application of the term "portico" to these buildings amounts to a *petitio principii*. And until a connection with the scene-building shall have been proved beyond a peradventure the value of these pictures as evidence for the scenic arrangements in the theater amounts to nothing.

Four vases in particular are cited. These are the Medea-vase at Munich, the Antigone-vase at Ruvo, and the Meleager-vase and the Archemorus-vase at Naples. Of these the first is the most elaborate and the most beautiful (Fig. 24).<sup>217</sup> It represents a structure consisting of entablature and gable supported by six tall and slender Ionic columns resting on a stylobate of two steps. Within the building Creusa is portrayed writhing upon a throne,

<sup>215</sup> It is responsible, I believe, for the assumption that the floor of the *proskenion* was elevated a step or two above the level of the orchestra (see p. 39).

<sup>216</sup> As by Rees, "The Function of the *Πρόθυρον* in the Production of Greek Plays," *Class. Phil.*, X (1915), 124 ff. He assumes without argument that the buildings represent vestibules; thus (p. 125): "The portico as portrayed on the vases . . ."; "The vestibule on the Naples vase . . ."; "A similar porch is found . . ."; "Three persons are standing inside the vestibule." "It would be hazardous to lay too much emphasis upon the portrayal of the prothyron in these (Pompeian) wall-paintings and on the vases. . . . The representations are no doubt conventionalized. But it seems certain that the somewhat conventionalized portico of these paintings was modeled after the actual stage-building."

<sup>217</sup> It was found at Canosa, and has been discussed by Jahn, *Arch. Zeit*, V (1847), 33 ff., and XXV (1867), pp. 58 ff.; Dilthey, *ibid.* XXXIII (1875), 68, 69; Robert, *Bild und Lied*, (1881), pp. 37 ff.; Vogel, *Scenen euripideischer Tragödien in griechischen Vasengemälden* (1886), pp. 146 ff.; Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, II (1887), p. 903; Huddilston, *Greek Tragedy in the Light of Vase Paintings* (1898), pp. 144 ff.; Furtwängler und Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, Ser. 2 (1909), pp. 161 ff.; Durrbach in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dict. des antiq. grec. et rom.*, art. "Medea"; Cook, *Zeus* (1914), pp. 251, 252; and many others.





FIG. 25. — VASE-PAINTING SHOWING THE PALACE OF PLUTO AND PERSEPHONE AND SCENES IN THE UNDER-WORLD (FROM A VASE AT MUNICH; FÜRTWÄNGLER-REICHOLD, *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, Tafel 10).



while beside her and partially supporting her stands her aged father Creon. From the right and with one foot already on the stylobate approaches in haste her brother Hippotes wearing *chlamys* and *petasos*; from the left an elderly woman, designated as Merope, rushes toward the building in evident alarm. Other figures and objects complete the picture. That the painting was directly inspired by tragedy there can be no doubt; but what of the building? Does it represent portico or palace itself? Surely the latter is the more reasonable, as it is also the more common, explanation and it is strongly supported by a comparison with the sepulchral vase-paintings which depict, probably under Orphic influence, the sterner aspects of life in the underworld (*cf.* Fig. 25).<sup>218</sup> These Hades-vases constitute an important group, and the palace of Pluto and Persephone, which regularly occupies the center of the composition, bears a striking resemblance not only to that of the Medea-vase but to many of the *heroa* (shrines) and other structures depicted on both vases and tombstones.

The relations of these several types to one another have as yet not been fully determined,<sup>219</sup> but to assume, as we should be obliged to do on Dörpfeld's hypothesis, that the palace of the Hades-vases was copied from the scene-building of the theater

<sup>218</sup> The series is published in the *Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, Ser. E, Taf. 1-7. See also Rayet et Collignon, *Histoire de la céramique grecque* (1888), pp. 305 ff.; Winkler, "Unter-italische Unterweltdarstellungen," *Breslauer Phil. Abh.*, III, Heft 5 (1888); Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, III (1889), art. "Unterwelt"; Durrbach, art. "Inferi" in Daremberg-Saglio, *op. cit.*; Furtwängler-Reichhold, *op. cit.*, Ser. 1 (1904), pp. 47 ff.

Among the figures (Fig. 25) one recognizes, in addition to Pluto and Persephone, Orpheus with his lyre, Sisyphus driven to his task by a Fury, Hermes, Heracles with the dog Cerberus, Tantalus and the overhanging rock, and the three judges of the dead.

<sup>219</sup> As Wheeler remarks (Fowler and Wheeler, *Greek Archaeology* (1909), p. 512): "The Greek vases of southern Italy have not yet received as much scientific study as has been given to many of the earlier styles. . . . The conditions therefore of their origin and development are less thoroughly known." Compare Robert, *Hermes*, XXXVI (1901), 377: "und dieses [*i.e.* the building on the Medea-vase, etc.] selbst nach dem Muster tarentinischer Grabdenkmäler gebildet ist; es repräsentirt zwar die Skene, aber es bildet sie nicht nach." Compare also Hoeber, *Griechische Vasen* (1909), pp. 124, 125.

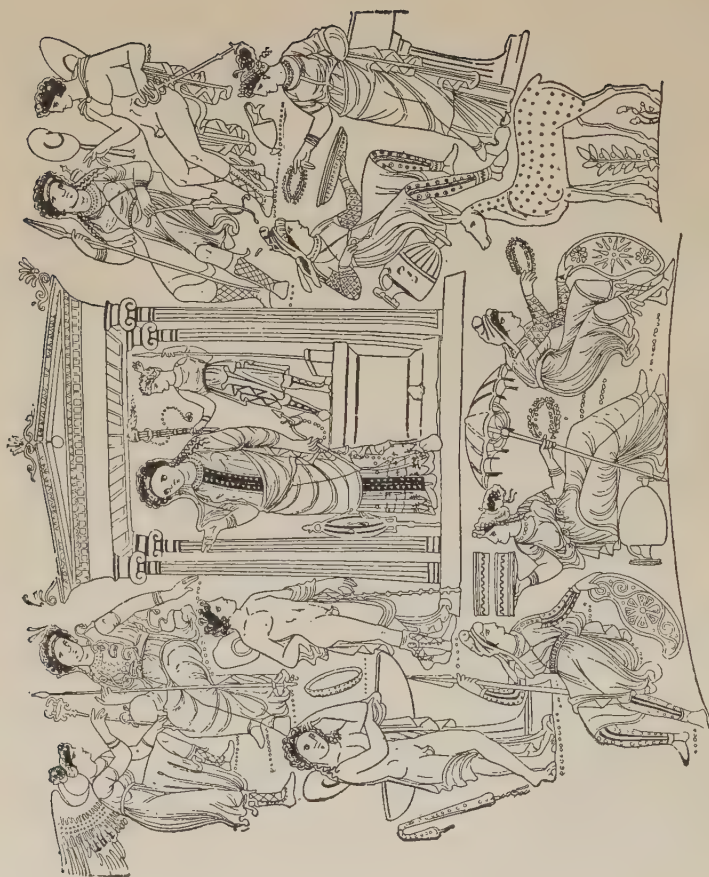


FIG. 26. — VASE-PAINTING BASED ON THE *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*; FROM AN AMPHORA AT PETROGRAD.

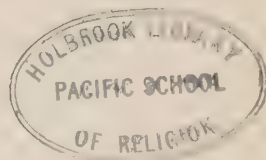
would be hazardous, if not indeed actually perverse. Herein indeed lies the fundamental weakness in Dörpfeld's argument. It consists in a neglect of the larger problem of the origin of this architectural feature as it affects all of these different groups of vases. He selects a small number of paintings and treats them as an insulated genre — a method that surely invites disaster. This becomes even more obvious when we compare another series of pictures in which the building represents a temple, as in the numerous Iphigenia-vases. To seek the prototype of the temple in the theater would be both gratuitous and absurd, as Dörpfeld himself recognized (p. 310), and yet in some instances the representation of the temple is virtually identical with that of the palace. The artists' copybook is again in evidence (cf. Fig. 26).<sup>220</sup> Indeed a study of a score or more of the vase-paintings, in which occur representations of palaces, temples and the like, forces one to the conclusion that none of these reproduces in any dependable manner the architectural arrangements of the scene-building. The Medea-vase therefore cannot be admitted as evidence of a projecting portico before the *skene* — a conclusion that appears to be reënforced by the further consideration that the scene in question, the agony and death of Creusa, was in all probability not enacted in the presence of the audience, that is in the vestibule, but took place within the palace itself.<sup>221</sup>

The interpretation of the Antigone-vase (Fig. 27)<sup>222</sup> is still more

<sup>220</sup> The temple appears in many different forms; see Overbeck, *Die Bildwerke zum thebischen und troischen Heldenkreis* (1857), Taf. 30; Vogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 ff.; Huddilston, *op. cit.*, figs. 18–21. Figure 26 (*Monumenti dell' Istituto*, VI, 66) is from an amphora which is (or was) in the Hermitage Museum at Petrograd.

<sup>221</sup> Dörpfeld (p. 307) parries this objection. I say "in all probability," for unfortunately we do not know whether the painting was inspired by the *Medea* of Euripides or by that of some later poet. For a partial bibliography of this controversy, see note 217.

<sup>222</sup> Heydemann, *Ueber eine nacheuripideische Tragödie* (1868); *Mon. dell' Inst.*, X, Taf. 26–27; Vogel, *op. cit.* (note 217), pp. 50 ff.; Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, I (1885), 84; Klügmann, *Ann. dell' Inst. Arch.* (1876), 173 ff.; Harrison, *Themis* (1912), pp. 376, 377. Heracles, Antigone, Haemon, Creon



difficult. It is generally assumed that the building represents a palace; but this is far from certain. Within the structure stands Heracles, and his name appears in large letters upon the architrave. This is most puzzling. If Heracles was the *deus ex machina*, his appearance within the building is not easy to explain; while on the other hand he cannot have been the protagonist in any *Antigone*, and for this reason assigned to a central position in the



FIG. 27. — VASE-PAINTING FROM THE ANTIGONE-VASE AT RUVO.

composition. Possibly the artist drew upon other sources than the drama for this portion of his picture — an explanation adopted by Miss Harrison, who resolves the mystery by calling the structure an Heracleum or *heroon* of Heracles:

In the saga he [Heracles], for some reason not given, asks Creon a favor. He is no daimon; he is just one mortal of royal race asking a boon of another. But art is more conservative. Heracles was the hero of Thebes and on the amphora his heroon, marked by his name, bulks proportionately large. He, not Creon, for all Creon's kingly sceptre, is the Hero to be intreated. It is a strange instructive fusion and confusion of two strata of thinking.<sup>223</sup>

and Ismene are named; the other figures are uncertain. The scene appears to be borrowed from a lost drama by an unknown poet, the plot of which is preserved by Hyginus (*Fab. 72*).

<sup>223</sup> *Themis* (1912), p. 377.



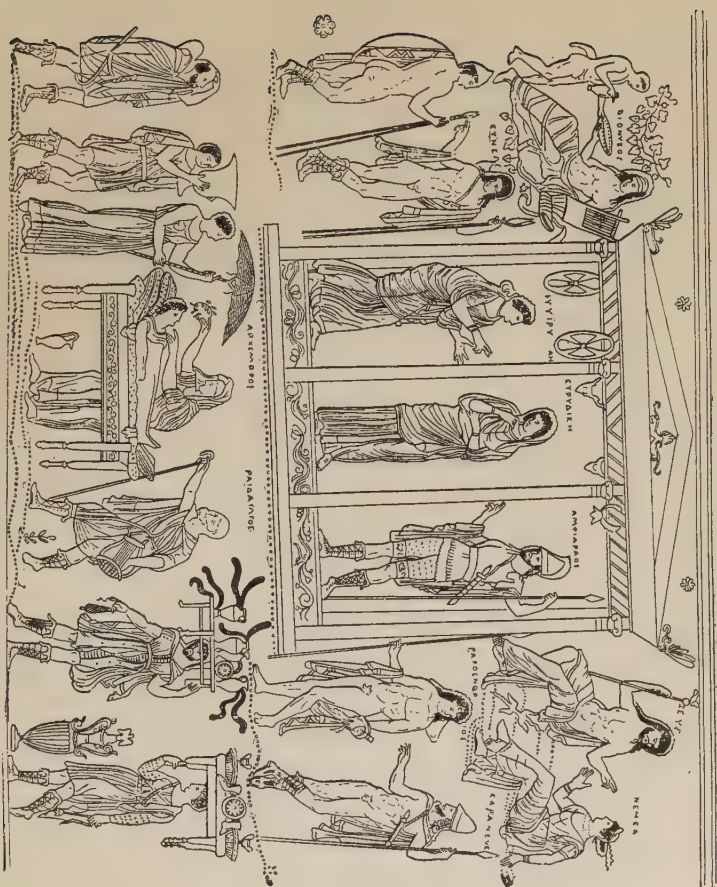


FIG. 28. — VASE-PAINTING FROM THE ARCHEMORUS-VASE AT NAPLES.



The structures pictured on the Archemorus-vase (Fig. 28)<sup>224</sup> and on the Meleager-vase (Fig. 29)<sup>225</sup> are less ornate. The latter bears a slight resemblance to the conventional *proskenion*,<sup>226</sup> but the columns at the rear render this connection dubious. Neither of these paintings, however, contributes any dependable information regarding the appearance of the scene-building. Indeed it is not absolutely certain that either of them was directly inspired by the drama. And when we reflect that in Greek houses the *prothyron* was regularly a space or room extending inward from the front wall rather than outward toward the street<sup>227</sup> the theory that in the early theater a projecting portico was sometimes erected before the *skene* appears to lose every vestige of support.

In conclusion one other ancient picture deserves to be mentioned. This is the beautiful painting representing a scene from the sad story of Niobe and her children (Fig. 30),<sup>228</sup> the original of which in Robert's opinion was the work of an Athenian artist of the fifth century. The building, which is apparently of unusual construction, Robert at first explained in accordance with Dörpfeld's restoration of the scene-building; but later he withdrew this

<sup>224</sup> Vogel, *op. cit.* (note 217), pp. 99 ff.; Baumeister, *op. cit.*, I, 114; Gerhard, "Archemoros und die Hesperiden," *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, I, 5; Decharme, *Euripides and the Spirit of his Dramas*; translated by Loeb (1905), p. 198.

At the bottom of the picture is the body of Archemorus lying on the bier; an elderly woman approaches to place a wreath upon his head. Above in the center stands his grief-stricken mother Eurydice. On her right appears Hypsipyle in an attitude of supplication; on her left, Amphiaras, who seems to be interceding for the unhappy Hypsipyle.

<sup>225</sup> Jahn, *Archaeologische Zeitung*, 1867, 33 ff., Tafel 220; Vogel, *op. cit.*, pp. 80 ff.; Engelmann, *Archaeologische Studien zu den Tragikern* (1900), pp. 80 ff. Supported by his sister Deianira and his half-brother Tydeus, Meleager sinks in death upon a bed.

<sup>226</sup> So Engelmann, *Arch. Stud.*, p. 80.

<sup>227</sup> See Guhl-Koner, *Leben der Griechen und Römer*, ed. 6, 1893, 194; Doremberg-Saglio, *op. cit.*, art. "Domus," p. 346.

<sup>228</sup> The painting is upon marble and was found at Pompeii in the year 1872. The predominating colors are gold and a delicate shade of violet. For Robert's discussion of this picture see *Hermes*, XXXVI (1901), 368 ff., *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLXIV (1902), 430, and *Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm*, no. 24 (1903). Figure 30 is a photograph of the colored reproduction in the article last mentioned; reference may be made to this article for additional bibliographical material.

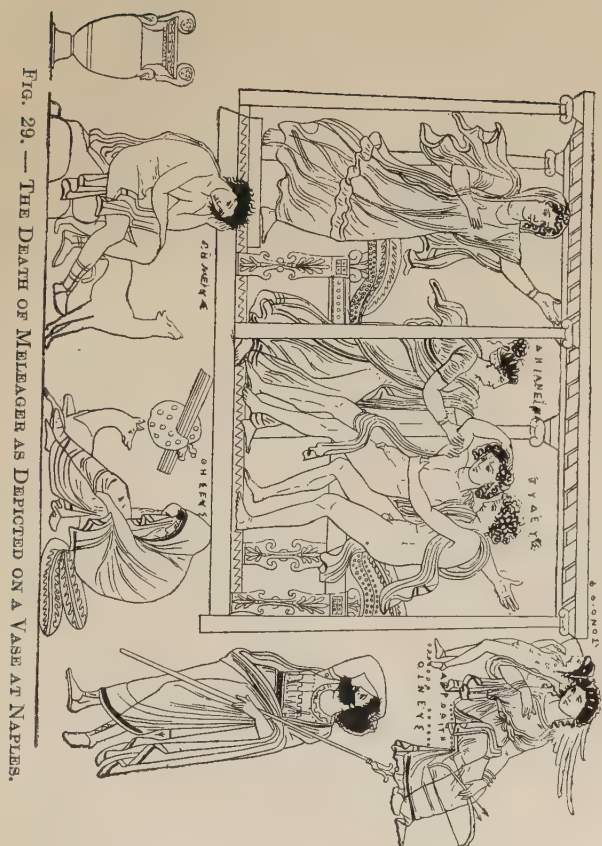


FIG. 29. — THE DEATH OF MELEAGER AS DEPICTED ON A VASE AT NAPLES.

conjecture and interpreted the structure rather as a representation of a *proskenion* of the more normal type.<sup>229</sup> But so far as I am aware this interpretation has not been received with favor. Certainly his suggestion that the original of this painting was a "Votivbild" dedicated in commemoration of the *Niobe* of Sophocles rests upon a series of unsubstantiated hypotheses.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>229</sup> "Jetzt glaube ich richtiger zu urteilen, wenn ich die Säulenreihe als das Proskenion, die Wand dahinter aber als die Fassade der Skene betrachte. Wir haben also hier das älteste Säulenproskenion leibhaftig vor uns." ("Niobe," *Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm*, no. 24, p. 6.)

<sup>230</sup> The relation of the Pompeian wall paintings to the Greek theater is problematic, but certainly these throw no light upon the architecture of the scene-building in the fifth century. Their bearing upon the problem of the later *skene* has been discussed most recently by Fiechter, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 ff.

## VIII

### THE ORIGIN OF THE *PROSKENION*

The origin of the *proskenion* is a problem of basic importance. Although often waved lightly aside, it invariably rechallenges attention, for its solution is essential to a consistent and satisfactory account of the development of the scene-building. Consideration of this problem therefore will form a fitting conclusion to this brief study of the Greek theater of the fifth century. But we should remember that at the best any attempt to restore the scene-building and to trace its history during the pre-Lycurgean period must be based largely on conjecture. Fortunately, however, a few factors are known, while others may be assumed with a reasonable degree of assurance.

As was shown in chapter 3 (Fig. 20), the inner sides of the *paraskenia* of the fourth-century scene-building and the wall connecting them at the rear exactly fit the circle of the old terrace and the north-south diameter of the remaining portion of this terrace is the same as that of the fourth-century orchestra. From these facts the inferences were drawn that before the position of the theater was moved the scene-building had been erected both on and about the orchestra-terrace, and that further in its essential features it had served as the model for the building which later replaced it. This conclusion is supported by a study of the contemporary drama. For, as we saw in chapter 4, the *skene*, although doubtless at first a small and flimsy structure (cf. *σκηνή* "hut," "booth") came to be, long before the close of the fifth century, a building of considerable substantialness and in part two stories in height. In this same chapter, moreover, it was pointed out that when the scene-building represented a house or

temple it was not customary to place a flight of steps before the door; the threshold was virtually on a level with the orchestra. And it was shown further that some plays required for their presentation a portico of appreciable size. The assumption that this was indicated merely by painting was rejected as untenable, while the conjecture that it extended outward toward the orchestra was shown (chap. 7) to rest upon evidence of questionable validity. Probably rather it was set *into* the building after the manner familiar in ordinary Greek houses.

Again, as was shown in chapter 5, the daily program was of extraordinary length and changes of the set were not infrequently demanded, especially between plays. The legitimate inference is that the scenic arrangements were simple and of such a sort that the setting could be easily and quickly altered. And yet, as we saw, there is no evidence for the use in the fifth century of large painted canvases or the like, whether attached to the back wall or placed before it as a *scaena ductilis*. And finally, we know that in the Hellenistic age there was a *proskenion* consisting of columns (or posts) and panels, with entablature and platform above, and we have seen reasons (chap. 2) for believing that a similar structure of wood was in use as early at least as the fourth century. If this be granted, it is perhaps not unreasonable to conjecture that this feature of the Lycurgean *skene* originated in the fifth century (p. 31).

With these several facts and assumptions in mind let us inquire more closely into the purpose and the origin of this *proskenion*. To the first of these questions two answers have been proposed: the *proskenion* was intended to serve either as a stage or as a decorative background. The second portion of the problem, that concerning the origin of the *proskenion*, is not readily separable from the first, and the proposals which have been offered in its solution may be treated as five in number, to which I would add a sixth; but the lines of demarcation are not in all cases clear-cut. They may be classified, however, somewhat as follows:





FIG. 30. — NIOBE AND HER DAUGHTER, FROM A PAINTING ON MARBLE FOUND AT POMPEII.



I. The *proskenion* was a *stage*. It was about twelve or thirteen feet in height and (1) erected some time in the fifth century; or (2) imported toward the close of the fourth century from southern Italy or elsewhere to replace a low stage; or (3) resulted from the gradual elevation of a low stage.

II. The *proskenion* was a *background*. (4) This was placed before the *scène-building* at first in many different forms, but gradually that form which had been employed to represent a house or palace<sup>231</sup> became the normal and dominant type; or (5) was arbitrarily added at some time in the fifth century as a decorative screen; or finally — my own thesis — (6) was in point of origin the Aeschylean *skene* itself.

The first of these views, that the *proskenion* was erected in the fifth century as a stage, is the old doctrine, which overwhelmed by the smothering effect of Dörpfeld's discoveries and a more searching study of the fifth-century drama burned with steadily decreasing vigor during the closing decade of the nineteenth century, flared up for a moment in the pages of Puchstein,<sup>232</sup> and at last flickered out. The second theory was proposed by Fiechter.<sup>233</sup> When the *proskenion* was introduced, say about the year 319 B.C., and placed before the *scène-building*, the first story of the latter was raised and became henceforth the second story (cf. Figs. 11, 12) — an evasive and *tendenziös* hypothesis which it is impossible to accept. Fiechter's attempt to trace the architectural development of the theater breaks down at this point, as it does also in connection with the *paraskenia* (p. 13). The third view, that the *proskenion* resulted from the gradual elevation of a low stage, was the explanation adopted by Bethe, Haigh, Gardner,

<sup>231</sup> Or, as Noack holds, the *Vorhalle* of a *Telesterion*; see note 208, above.

<sup>232</sup> *Die griechische Bühne* (1901), p. 139: "die ältere Bühne [about four meters high; cf. pp. 136, 137] von Athen ebenso alt anzusetzen wie die von Eretria, in das 4. oder 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr., jedenfalls in die Zeit vor Lykurg." Puchstein frankly acknowledged (p. 2) that he eschewed completely the evidence of the drama.

<sup>233</sup> *Die baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des antiken Theaters* (1914), p. 40.

Furtwängler, Verrall and many others,<sup>234</sup> but as it was based upon the erroneous assumption of a stage in the fifth century (pp. 13, 36 ff.), it, like the two preceding theories, may be dismissed from further consideration.

The fourth explanation marks an advance over the other three, but, as was pointed out in chapters 6 and 7, it is supported in part by arguments of dubious validity, and besides contains certain inherent weaknesses which render its acceptance difficult. The fifth theory, that the *proskenion* was added at some time in the fifth century as a decorative screen, has many adherents<sup>235</sup> and in my judgment is nearest the truth. It appears to carry with it, however, the implicit assumption that the scene-building was at first a plain and unattractive structure whose unsightliness, though tolerated for a season, at length became offensive and was accordingly screened from view by means of a decorative colonnade or of painted scenery.<sup>236</sup> And surely if the early *skene* was as devoid of beauty as the restorations shown in figure 23 (without the *prothyron*) and figures 12 and 22 suggest, one may readily grant the need of a decorative front to conceal its ugliness. But that in the days of Ictinus, Callicrates, Phidias and Agatharchus, the Athenians would have erected a scene-building which, no matter how small it may have been or how temporary in character, was not well proportioned and attractively adorned is simply inconceivable. Herein lies the first objection to the theory that the *proskenion* was added to the *skene* as a decorative screen. That it was not erected before the scene-building, but was in origin the scene-building itself may seem at first blush a startling

<sup>234</sup> Most recently by Petersen, *Die griechische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (1915), p. 540.

<sup>235</sup> So most recently Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama* (1918), p. 58: "The front of the scene-building and of the parascenia came to be decorated with a row of columns," etc.; p. 68: "At about the same time [*i.e.* about 430 B.C.] a proscenium (also of wood) was erected before the parascenia and the intermediate front of the scene-building," etc.

<sup>236</sup> Compare the words of Mantzius (p. 91), who, however, apparently believes that the *proskenion* was introduced as early as 460 or 465 B.C., and those of Haigh and Bolle (pp. 89, 90). See also Flickinger, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

thesis, but it is, I believe, an hypothesis which presents a consistent and natural explanation of the development of the *skene*, and several arguments may be adduced in its support.

Let us begin with the *paraskenia*. We have seen that the inner sides of the fourth-century *paraskenia* together with the wall connecting them at the rear fit the old orchestra-terrace, and that the remaining space was exactly large enough to receive a circle the size of the fourth-century orchestra. This demonstrates that before the theater was moved nearer to the slope of the Acropolis there had been erected either the *paraskenia* or a structure on the terrace extending probably to the chord *AB* (Fig. 20), or both. It is my belief for reasons which will be explained presently that both had been erected. The original purpose of the *paraskenia* is in doubt, but it is generally believed that they inclosed either a stage or a columnated *proskenion*.<sup>237</sup> The theory, however, that a stage occupied this space is, as we have seen, unacceptable. Only two alternatives remain. A structure erected on the terrace must have been either *proskenion* or *skene* itself. Moreover it is clear that no part of this assumed structure extended beyond the chord which connects the northern ends of the inner walls of the *paraskenia*, as shown in figures 20 and 21. Otherwise the orchestra-area, and also the size of the fourth-century orchestra, would have been reduced.

If we assume that the structure which stood on the orchestra-terrace was the *proskenion*, it would follow, inasmuch as there could not have been a *proskenion* until after a *skene* had been

<sup>237</sup> Haigh-Pickard-Cambridge, *The Attic Theatre* (1907), 132: "The only possible purpose of the deep side-wings was to inclose a stage"; cf. p. 120. Capps, *Class. Rev.* IX (1896), 136: "The only explanation that can be offered is that they were used for the support of the wooden proscenium." See also Dörpfeld und Reisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 202, 371; Puchstein, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Bodenstein, *Das antike Theater* (1902), p. 12; Fiechter, *op. cit.*, p. 67; etc. For other views see Christ, *S.-B. d. k. b. Akad. d. Wiss., München*, XXIV (1894), 42; Bethe, *Prolegomena* (1896), p. 207; Robert, *Hermes*, XXXI (1896), 557, and *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, CLXIV (1902) 433, 434; Holwerda, *Athen. Mitth.*, XXIII (1898), 382 ff.; Streit, *Das Theater* (1903), pp. 10 ff.; Noack, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff., etc.



erected, that the latter was at first built beyond the orchestra-terrace and tangent thereto in the place "where the declivity had been," as Dörpfeld, Flickinger and others suppose (*cf.* Fig. 17). To this hypothesis there are at least two cogent objections. In the first place, the erection of the scene-building in this position would have involved greater structural difficulties and therefore greater expense. It is a far more reasonable conjecture that the *skene* was originally erected on the floor of the terrace (*cf.* Fig. 19*b*). Again, with the parodi in the position which we have shown them to have had (Figs. 20, 21) the placing of the scene-building beyond the circle of the terrace at a distance of some thirteen feet back of the line of the parodi would have increased the difficulties of the action. The distances in a theater the size of that at Athens are so great that the addition of even so small an amount as twelve or thirteen feet would occasion increased embarrassment.<sup>238</sup> Considerations of economy and of dramaturgy would therefore, I believe, have led the Athenians to erect the scene-building as near as possible to the parodi and not beyond the terrace where the declivity had been, some thirteen feet to the rear. Moreover we may infer from the fact that the fourth-century scene-building so exactly fits the circle of the terrace that this early *skene* extended from parodus to parodus; in other words that its front wall formed a chord (*AB*, Fig. 20) of the circle, and that its rear wall rested on the southernmost arc of the retaining wall. Thus it would be a structure, about twenty meters in length, and four meters deep, and as we have seen (p. 32), was probably about four meters in height. And as the colonnade with the entablature which it supported was the prevailing type of decoration in Greek architecture, we may assume that the front of the Aeschylean scene-building also was so adorned. But as this was not an ordinary structure, but was erected to serve as a background for dramatic performances, the use of panels

<sup>238</sup> This is clear to me from my repeated participation in the staging of plays in the Greek theater at the University of California.

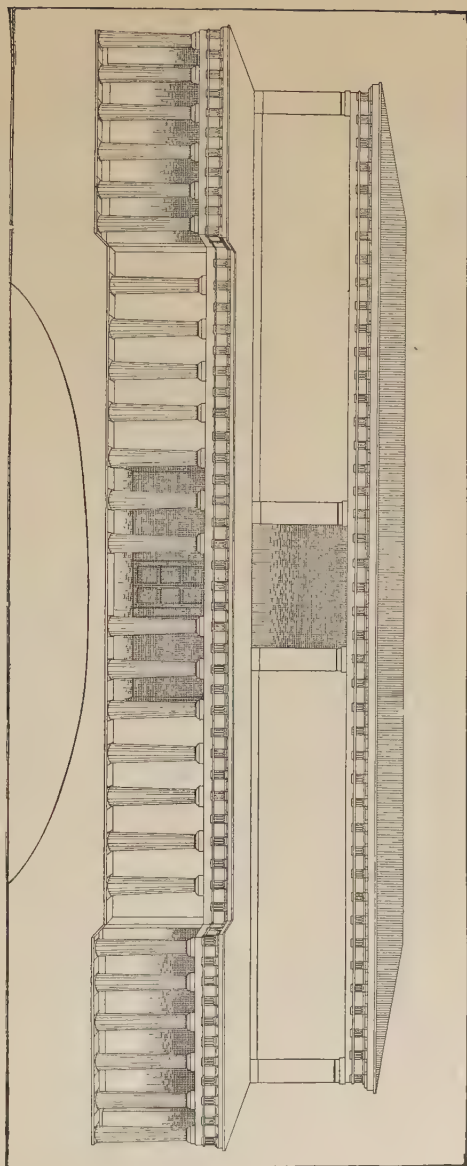


FIG. 31. — CONJECTURAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SCENE-BUILDING AT ATHENS TOWARD THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.

or curtains or the like between the columns partly as a decorative scheme, partly to facilitate the change of the setting, would readily suggest itself. The appearance and the use then of the early *skene* would thus closely resemble the Hellenistic *proskenion*.

But what of the *paraskenia*? These were added, in my opinion, for two reasons. The first was to increase the dressing-room facilities; the second, to provide a more effective and more ornamental screen to conceal the movements of actors as they passed behind the scenes from *parodus* to *parodus*. The need of such a screen is apparent, but is, strange to say, often overlooked. The suggestion made by Reisch,<sup>239</sup> that the actors would be sufficiently concealed by the terrace-wall, the temple of Dionysus, the dedicatory monuments and the trees of the sacred precinct, is not convincing. Indeed the inclusion of the temple in this list is absurd, as figures 16 and 17 clearly show. There was need rather of a continuous screen adjoining the scene-building, and this would be most artistically provided by extending this building both to right and left and adorning the front-wall of each of these wings with a colonnade. This decorative scheme would be an object of beauty in itself and moreover would harmonize with the columns of the intermediate structure. The date when the *skene* was thus enlarged cannot at present be determined. But the first absolutely certain instance of the need of a screen to conceal the actors as they passed from *parodus* to *parodus* occurs in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, a play that was performed in the year 458 B.C. At verse 93 Orestes accompanied by the god Hermes departs from the temple of Apollo at Delphi to seek refuge at the shrine of Athena in Athens. Shortly thereafter the Furies, twelve in number, who constitute the chorus, follow in hot pursuit. At verse 235 Orestes and Hermes reënter, of course from the side opposite to that by which they had departed, and at verse 244, the Furies, tracking their quarry like hounds upon the scent. Here then is a clear case of the use of a screen

<sup>239</sup> *Das griechische Theater*, pp. 194, 195.

to conceal the movements of actors, but it is not a proof that the *paraskenia* had already been erected. I have stated that this example in the *Eumenides* is the earliest absolutely certain instance of the passing of actors behind the scenes. But it was in all probability not the first instance. For if it be true, as most believe, that in the pre-Sophoclean period all the rôles in a play, except of course that of the chorus, were divided between two actors only, a screen of some sort was needed as early as the *Suppliants* of Aeschylus, a drama that is usually assigned to about the year 490 B.C.<sup>240</sup> And the same is true also of the *Persians* (472 B.C.), the *Seven against Thebes* (467 B.C.) and probably the *Prometheus Bound*. Unfortunately, however, none of these plays affords a solution of the problem. But as the *skene* had been introduced several years before the performance of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus (458 B.C.), the *paraskenia* may have been added at this time. But this is purely conjectural.

If, however, the Aeschylean *skene* was erected on the terrace between the line connecting the *parodi* and the retaining wall at the rear, it is clear that a *proskenion* placed before this structure would have encroached upon the orchestra-area. Additions to the building, barring an upper story, could be made only at the ends, where we believe the *paraskenia* were constructed, or in the rear. In other words, after the *paraskenia* had been added, the building developed in the direction away from the auditorium rather than toward it, as is usually assumed. And this occurred, I believe, when the need of a second story was felt. For if a *proskenion* was not placed in front of the *skene*, and if the roof of the *skene* continued to be used as a platform, even after the addition of the upper story, then clearly the latter together with its substructure was erected at the rear. The date when the

<sup>240</sup> On the number of actors in Greek drama see Rees, *The So-called Rule of Three Actors in the Classical Greek Drama* (1908); Kaffenberger, *Das Dreischauapielergesetz in der griechischen Tragödie* (1911). Naturally neither of these treatises deals at length with the pre-Sophoclean period. For Noack's view see note 63 above.

scene-building was thus enlarged was probably not later than 430 B.C. and may have been many years earlier. And it is perhaps not unreasonable to conjecture that at the time when these additions were projected the position of the theater was shifted and not at the end of the fifth century or in the Lysurgian period. The precise date of this change however is not determinable.

Whether this new portion of the scene-building extended the full length of the older structure, including the *paraskenia* is not known. Nor do we know how the upper story (the *episkenion*) appeared. The reconstruction shown in figure 31 is conjectural. The early structure had been known as the *skene* (σκήνη or σκηναι), and this designation continued to be used of the entire scene-building not only during the period of its evolution but even after it had become a large and imposing edifice. The wings at the end came to be called the *paraskenia* (παρά, "at the side of"), and the upper story, the *episkenion* (ἐπί, "upon"). The use of the term *proskenion* (πρό, "before") was due, I believe, to analogy and was applied to the original portion, which was now small in comparison with the whole and stood nearest the orchestra. This part, like all of the scene-building in the fifth century, was constructed of wood. And even after the other parts of the building were made of stone and marble this original portion, which was still the main background of the action and which was subject to modification in accordance with the exigencies of the plays, continued for many years to be a temporary, wooden erection.



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